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THE ENCHANTED ISLAND
NEW POEMS

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COLLECTED POEMS

BY

ALFRED NOYES

VOL. II.

DRAKE
THE ENCHANTED ISLAND
NEW POEMS

FIFTH IMPRESSION

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

	PAGE
DRAKE	1
MIST IN THE VALLEY	202
A SONG OF THE PLOUGH	206
THE BANNER	209
RANK AND FILE	210
THE SKY-LARK CAGED	216
THE LOVERS' FLIGHT	218
THE ROCK POOL	222
THE ISLAND HAWK	226
THE ADMIRAL'S GHOST	232
EDINBURGH	236
IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE	237
AN EAST-END COFFEE-STALL	239
RED OF THE DAWN	241
THE DREAM-CHILD'S INVITATION	244
THE TRAMP TRANSFIGURED	247
ON THE DOWNS	262
A MAY-DAY CAROL	264
THE CALL OF THE SPRING	265
A DEVONSHIRE DITTY	268
BACCHUS AND THE PIRATES	270

THE NEWSPAPER BOY 279
THE TWO WORLDS 281
GORSE 283
FOR THE EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY OF GEORGE MEREDITH . 285
IN MEMORY OF SWINBURNE 286
ON THE DEATH OF FRANCIS THOMPSON . . . 289
IN MEMORY OF MEREDITH 292
A FRIEND OF CARLYLE 294
THE TESTIMONY OF ART 302
THE SCHOLARS 303
RESURRECTION 304
A JAPANESE LOVE-SONG 306
THE TWO PAINTERS 308
THE ENCHANTED ISLAND 318
UNITY 323
THE HILL-FLOWER 324
ACTÆON 327
LUCIFER'S FEAST 333
VETERANS 340
THE QUEST RENEWED 341
THE LIGHTS OF HOME 343
'TWEEN THE LIGHTS 344
CREATION 348
THE PASSING OF THE KING 351
THE SAILOR-KING 354
THE FIDDLER'S FAREWELL 356
TO A PESSIMIST 358
MOUNT IDA 359

COLLECTED POEMS.

DRAKE.

DEDICATED TO
RUDOLPH CHAMBERS LEHMANN.

EXORDIUM.

When on the highest ridge of that strange land,
Under the cloudless blinding tropic blue,
Drake and his band of swarthy seamen stood
With dazed eyes gazing round them, emerald fans
Of palm that fell like fountains over cliffs
Of gorgeous red anana bloom obscured
Their sight on every side. Illustrious gleams
Of rose and green and gold streamed from the plumes
That flashed like living rainbows through the glades.
Piratic glints of musketoon and sword,
The scarlet scarves around the tawny throats,
The bright brass ear-rings in the sun-black ears,
And the calm faces of the negro guides
Opposed their barbarous bravery to the noon;
Yet a deep silence dreadfully besieged
Even those mighty hearts upon the verge
Of the undiscovered world. Behind them lay
The old earth they knew. In front they could not see
What lay beyond the ridge. Only they heard
Cries of the painted birds troubling the heat

And shivering through the woods; till Francis Drake
Plunged through the hush, took hold upon a tree,
The tallest near them, and clomb upward, branch
By branch.
And lo, as he swung clear above
The steep-down forest, on his wondering eyes
Mile upon mile of rugged shimmering gold
Burst the unknown immeasurable sea.
Then he descended; and with a new voice
Vowed that, God helping, he would one day plough
Those virgin waters with an English keel.

So here before the unattempted task,
Above the Golden Ocean of my dream
I clomb and saw in splendid pageant pass
The wild adventures and heroic deeds
Of England's epic age, a vision lit
With mighty prophecies, fraught with a doom
Worthy the great Homeric roll of song,
Yet all unsung and unrecorded quite
By those who might have touched with Raphael's hand
The large imperial legend of our race,
Ere it brought forth the braggarts of an hour,
Self-worshippers who love their imaged strength,
And as a symbol for their own proud selves
Misuse the sacred name of this dear land,
While England to the Empire of her soul
Like some great Prophet passes through the crowd
That cannot understand; for he must climb
Up to that sovran thunder-smitten peak
Where he shall grave and trench on adamant
The Law that God shall utter by the still
Small voice, not by the whirlwind or the fire.
There labouring for the Highest in himself
He shall achieve the good of all mankind;
And from that lonely Sinai shall return
Triumphant o'er the little gods of gold
That rule their little hour upon the plain.

Oh, thou blind master of these opened eyes
Be near me, therefore, now; for not in pride
I lift lame hands to this imperious theme;
But yearning to a power above mine own
Even as a man might lift his hands in prayer.
Or as a child, perchance, in those dark days
When London lay beleaguered and the axe
Flashed out for a bigot empire; and the blood
Of martyrs made a purple path for Spain
Up to the throne of Mary; as a child
Gathering with friends upon a winter's morn
For some mock fight between the hateful prince
Philip and Thomas Wyatt, all at once
Might see in gorgeous ruffs embastioned
Popinjay plumes and slouching hats of Spain,
Gay shimmering silks and rich encrusted gems,
Gold collars, rare brocades, and sleek trunk-hose
The Ambassador and peacock courtiers come
Strutting along the white snow-strangled street,
A walking plot of scarlet Spanish flowers,
And with one cry a hundred boyish hands
Put them to flight with snowballs, while the wind
All round their Spanish ears hissed like a flight
Of white-winged geese; so may I wage perchance
A mimic war with all my heart in it,
Munitioned with mere perishable snow
Which mightier hands one day will urge with steel.
Yet may they still remember me as I
Remember, with one little laugh of love,
That child's game, this were wealth enough for me.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my prayer;
Help me that I may tell the enduring tale
Of that great seaman, good at need, who first
Sailed round this globe and made one little isle,
One little isle against that huge Empire
Of Spain whose might was paramount on earth,
O'ertopping Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, and Rome,

Carthage and all huge Empires of the past,
He made this little isle, against the world,
Queen of the earth and sea. Nor this alone
The theme; for, in a mightier strife engaged
Even than he knew, he fought for the new faiths,
Championing our manhood as it rose
And cast its feudal chains before the seat
Of kings; nay, in a mightier battle yet
He fought for the soul's freedom, fought the fight
Which, though it still rings in our wondering ears,
Was won then and for ever—that great war,
That last Crusade of Christ against His priests,
Wherein Spain fell behind a thunderous roar
Of ocean triumph over burning ships
And shattered fleets, while England, England rose,
Her white cliffs laughing out across the waves,
Victorious over all her enemies.
And while he won the world for her domain,
Her loins brought forth, her fostering bosom fed
Souls that have swept the spiritual seas
From heaven to hell, and justified her crown.
For round the throne of great Elizabeth
Spenser and Burleigh, Sidney and Verulam,
Clustered like stars, rare Jonson like the crown
Of Cassiopeia, Marlowe ruddy as Mars,
And over all those mighty hearts arose
The soul of Shakespeare brooding far and wide
Beyond our small horizons, like a light
Thrown from a vaster sun that still illumes
Tracts which the arc of our increasing day
Must still leave undiscovered, unexplored.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my prayer,
As thou didst touch the heart and light the flame
Of wonder in those eyes which first awoke
To beauty and the sea's adventurous dream
Three hundred years ago, three hundred years,
And five long decades, in the leafy lanes

Of Devon, where the tallest trees that bore
The raven's matted nest had yielded up
Their booty, while the perilous branches swayed
Beneath the boyish privateer, the king
Of many young companions, Francis Drake;
So hear me and so help, for more than his
My need is, even than when he first set sail
Upon that wild adventure with three ships
And three-score men from grey old Plymouth Sound,
Not knowing if he went to life or death,
Not caring greatly, so that he were true
To his own sleepless and unfaltering soul
Which could not choose but hear the ringing call
Across the splendours of the Spanish Main
From ever fading, ever new horizons,
And shores beyond the sunset and the sea.

Mother and sweetheart, England; from whose breast,
With all the world before them, they went forth,
Thy seamen, o'er the wide uncharted waste,
Wider than that Ulysses roamed of old,
Even as the wine-dark Mediterranean
Is wider than some wave-relinquished pool
Among its rocks, yet none the less explored
To greater ends than all the pride of Greece
And pomp of Rome achieved; if my poor song
Now spread too wide a sail, forgive thy son
And lover, for thy love was ever wont
To lift men up in pride above themselves
To do great deeds which of themselves alone
They could not; thou hast led the unfaltering feet
Of even thy meanest heroes down to death,
Lifted poor knights to many a great emprise,
Taught them high thoughts, and though they kept their souls
Lowly as little children, bidden them lift
Eyes unappalled by all the myriad stars
That wheel around the great white throne of God.

BOOK I.

Now through the great doors of the Council-room
Magnificently streamed in rich array
The peers of England, regal of aspèct
And grave. Their silence waited for the Queen:
And even now she came; and through their midst,
Low as they bowed, she passed without a smile
And took her royal seat. A bodeful hush
Of huge anticipation gripped all hearts,
Compressed all brows, and loaded the broad noon
With gathering thunder: none knew what the hour
Might yet bring forth; but the dark fire of war
Smouldered in every eye; for every day
The Council met debating how to join
Honour with peace, and every day new tales
Of English wrongs received from the red hands
Of that gigantic Empire, insolent
Spain, spurred fiercer resentments up like steeds
Revolting, on the curb, foaming for battle,
In all men's minds, against whatever odds.
On one side of the throne great Walsingham,
A lion of England, couchant, watchful, calm,
Was now the master of opinion: all
Drew to him. Even the hunchback Burleigh smiled
With half-ironic admiration now,
As in the presence of the Queen they met
Amid the sweeping splendours of her court,
A cynic smile that seemed to say, "I, too,
Would fain regain that forthright heart of fire;
Yet statesmanship is but a smoother name

For the superior cunning which ensures
Victory." And the Queen, too, knowing her strength
And weakness, though her woman's heart leaped out
To courage, yet with woman's craft preferred
The subtler strength of Burleigh; for she knew
Mary of Scotland waited for that war
To strike her in the side for Rome; she knew
How many thousands lurked in England still
Remembering Rome and bloody Mary's reign.
France o'er a wall of bleeding Huguenots
Watched for an hour to strike. Against all these
What shield could England raise, this little isle,—
Out-matched, outnumbered, perilously near
Utter destruction?

So the long debate
Proceeded.

All at once there came a cry
Along the streets and at the palace-gates
And at the great doors of the Council-room!
Then through the pikes and halberds a voice rose
Imperative for entrance, and the guards
Made way, and a strange whisper surged around,
And through the peers of England thrilled the blood
Of Agincourt as to the foot of the throne
Came Leicester, for behind him as he came
A seaman stumbled, travel-stained and torn,
Crying for justice, and gasped out his tale.
"The Spaniards," he moaned, "the Inquisition!
They have taken all my comrades, all our crew,
And flung them into dungeons: there they lie
Waiting for England, waiting for their Queen!
Will you not free them? I alone am left!
All London is afire with it, for this
Was one of your chief city merchant's ships—
The *Pride of London*, one of Osborne's ships!
But there is none to help them! I escaped
With shrieks of torment ringing in these ears,
The glare of torture-chambers in these eyes

That see no faces anywhere but blind
Blind faces, each a bruise of white that smiles
In idiot agony, washed with sweat and blood,
The face of some strange thing that once was man,
And now can only turn from side to side
Babbling like a child, with mouth agape,
And crying for help where there is none to hear
Save those black vizards in the furnace-glow,
Moving like devils at their hellish trade. . . ."
He paused; his memory sickened, his brain swooned
Back into that wild glare of obscene pain!
Once more to his ears and nostrils horribly crept
The hiss and smell of shrivelling human flesh!
His dumb stare told the rest: his head sank down;
He bowed; he fell; he strove in agony
With what all hideous words must leave untold;
While Leicester vouched him, "This man's tale is true!"
But like a gathering storm a windy moan
Of passion, like a tiger's, slowly crept
From the grey lips of Walsingham. "My Queen,
Will you not free them?"
Then Elizabeth,
Whose name is one for ever with the name
Of England, rose; and in her face the gleam
Of justice that makes anger terrible
Shone, and she stretched her glittering sceptre forth
And spoke, with distant empires in her eyes.

"My lords, this is the last cry they shall wring
From English lips unheeded: we will have
Such remedies for this as all the world
Shall tremble at!"
And, on that night, while Drake
Close in his London lodging lay concealed
Until he knew if it were peace or war
With Spain (for he had struck on the high seas
At Spain; and well he knew if it were peace
His blood would be made witness to that bond,

And he must die a pirate's death or fly
Westward once more), there all alone, he pored
By a struggling rushlight o'er a well-thumbed chart
Of magic islands in the enchanted seas,
Dreaming, as boys and poets only dream
With those that see God's wonders in the deep,
Perilous visions of those palmy keys,
Cocoa-nut islands, parrot-haunted woods,
Crisp coral reefs and blue shark-finned lagoons
Fringed with the creaming foam, mile upon mile
Of mystery. Dream after dream went by,
Colouring the brown air of that London night
With many a mad miraculous romance.
There, suddenly, some augury, some flash
Showed him a coming promise, a strange hint,
Which, though he played with it, he scarce believed;
Strange as in some dark cave the first fierce gleam
Of pirate gold to some forlorn maroon
Who tiptoes to the heap and glances round
Askance, and dreads to hear what erst he longed
To hear—some voice to break the hush; but bathes
Both hands with childish laughter in the gold,
And lets it trickle through his fevered palms,
And begins counting half a hundred times
And loses count each time for sheer delight
And wonder in it; meantime, if he knew,
Passing the cave-mouth, far away, beyond
The still lagoon, the coral reef, the foam
And the white fluttering chatter of the birds,
A sail that might have saved him comes and goes
Unseen across the blue Pacific sea.
So Drake, too, played with fancies; but that sail
Passed not unseen, for suddenly there came
A firm and heavy footstep to the door,
Then a loud knocking; and, at first, he thought
"I am a dead man: there is peace with Spain,
And they are come to lead me to my doom."
But, as he looked across one shoulder, pride

Checking the fuller watch for what he feared,
The door opened; and cold as from the sea
The night rushed in, and there against the gloom,
Clad, as it seemed, with wind and cloud and rain,
There loomed a stately form and high grim face
Loaded with deadly thoughts of iron war—
Walsingham,—in one hand he held a map
Marked with red lines; the other hand held down
The rich encrusted hilt of his great sword.
Then Drake rose, and the other cautiously
Closing the door drew near the flickering light
And spread his map out on the table, saying—
"Mark for me here the points whereat the King
Philip of Spain may best be wounded, mark
The joints of his harness;" and Drake looked at him
Thinking, "If he betray me, I am dead."
But the soldier met his eyes and, with a laugh,
Drake, quivering like a bloodhound in the leash,
Stooped, with his finger pointing thus and thus—
"Here would I guard, here would I lie in wait,
Here would I strike him through the breast and throat."
And as he spoke he kindled, and began
To set forth his great dreams, and high romance
Rose like a moon reflecting the true sun
Unseen; and as the full round moon indeed
Rising behind a mighty mountain-chain
Will shadow forth in outline grim and black
Its vast and ragged edges, so that moon
Of high romance rose greatly shadowing forth
The grandeur of his dreams, until their might
Dawned upon Walsingham, and he, too, saw
For a moment of muffled moonlight and wild cloud
The vision of the imperious years to be!
But suddenly Drake paused as one who strays
Beyond the bounds of caution, paused and cursed
His tongue for prating like a moon-struck boy's.
"I am mad," he cried, "I am mad to babble so!"
Then Walsingham drew near him with strange eyes

And muttered slowly, "Write that madness down;
Ay, write it down, that madman's plan of thine;
Sign it, and let me take it to the Queen."
But the weather-wiser seaman warily
Answered him, "If it please Almighty God
To take away our Queen Elizabeth,
Seeing that she is mortal as ourselves,
England might then be leagued with Spain, and I
Should here have sealed my doom. I will not put
My pen to paper."
So, across the charts
With that dim light on each grim countenance
The seaman and the courtier subtly fenced
With words and thoughts, but neither would betray
His whole heart to the other. At the last
Walsingham gripped the hand of Francis Drake
And left him wondering.
On the third night came
A messenger from Walsingham who bade
Drake to the Palace where, without one word,
The statesman met him in an anteroom
And led him, with flushed cheek and beating heart,
Along a mighty gold-gloomed corridor
Into a high-arched chamber, hung with tall
Curtains of gold-fringed silk and tapestries
From Flanders looms, whereon were flowers and beasts
And forest-work, great knights, with hawk on hand,
Riding for ever on their glimmering steeds
Through bowery glades to some immortal face
Beyond the fairy fringes of the world.
A silver lamp swung softly overhead,
Fed with some perfumed oil that shed abroad
Delicious light and fragrances as rare
As those that stirred faint wings at eventide
Through the King's House in Lebanon of old.
Into a quietness as of fallen bloom
Their feet sank in that chamber; and, all round
Soft hills of Moorish cushions dimly drowsed

On glimmering crimson couches. Near the lamp
An ebony chess-board stood inlaid with squares
Of ruby and emerald, garnished with cinquefoils
Of silver, bears and ragged staves: the men,
Likewise of precious stones, were all arrayed—
Bishops and knights and elephants and pawns—
As for a game. Sixteen of them were set
In silver white, the other sixteen gilt.
Now, as Drake gazed upon an arras, nigh
The farther doors, whereon was richly wrought
The picture of that grave and lovely queen
Penelope, with cold hands weaving still
The unending web, while in an outer court
The broad-limbed wooers basking in the sun
On purple fleeces took from white-armed girls,
Up-kirtled to the knee, the crimson wine;
There, as he gazed and thought, "Is this not like
Our Queen Elizabeth who waits and weaves,
Penelope of England, her dark web
Unendingly till England's Empire come;"
There, as he gazed, for a moment, he could vow
The pictured arras moved. Well had it been
Had he drawn sword and pierced it through and through;
But he suspected nothing and said nought
To Walsingham; for thereupon they heard
The sound of a low lute and a sweet voice
Carolling like a gold-caged nightingale,
Caught by the fowlers ere he found his mate,
And singing all his heart out evermore
To the unknown forest-love he ne'er should see.
And Walsingham smiled sadly to himself,
Knowing the weary queen had bidden some maid
Sing to her, even as David sang to Saul;
Since all her heart was bitter with her love
Or so it was breathed (and there the chess-board stood,
Her love's device upon it), though she still,
For England's sake, must keep great foreign kings
Her suitors, wedding no man till she died.

Nor did she know how, in her happiest hour
Remembered now most sorrowfully, the moon,
Vicegerent of the sky, through summer dews,
As that sweet ballad tells in plaintive rhyme,
Silvering the grey old Cumnor towers and all
The hollow haunted oaks that grew thereby,
Gleamed on a casement whence the pure white face
Of Amy Robsart, wife of Leicester, wife
Unknown of the Queen's lover a frail bar
To that proud Earl's ambition, quietly gazed
And heard the night-owl hoot a dark presage
Of murder through her timid shuddering heart.
But of that deed Elizabeth knew nought;
Nay, white as Amy Robsart in her dream
Of love she listened to the sobbing lute,
Bitterly happy, proudly desolate;
So heavy are all earth's crowns and sharp with thorns!
But tenderly that high-born maiden sang.

SONG.

Now the purple night is past,
Now the moon more faintly glows,
Dawn has through thy casement cast
Roses on thy breast, a rose;
Now the kisses are all done,
Now the world awakes anew,
Now the charmèd hour is gone,
Let not love go, too.

When old winter, creeping nigh,
Sprinkles raven hair with white,
Dims the brightly glancing eye,
Laughs away the dancing light,
Roses may forget their sun,
Lilies may forget their dew,
Beauties perish, one by one,
Let not love go, too.

Palaces and towers of pride
Crumble year by year away;
Creeds like robes are laid aside,
Even our very tombs decay!
When the all-conquering moth and rust
Gnaw the goodly garment through,
When the dust returns to dust,
Let not love go, too.

Kingdoms melt away like snow,
Gods are spent like wasting flames,
Hardly the new peoples know
Their divine thrice-worshipped names!
At the last great hour of all,
When thou makest all things new,
Father, hear Thy children call,
Let not love go, too.

The song ceased: all was still; and now it seemed
Power brooded on the silence, and Drake saw
A woman come to meet him,—tall and pale
And proud she seemed: behind her head two wings
As of some mighty phantom butterfly
Glimmered with jewel-sparks in the gold gloom.
Her small, pure, grey-eyed face above her ruff
Was chiselled like an agate; and he knew
It was the Queen. Low bent he o'er her hand;
And "Ah," she said, "Sir Francis Walsingham
Hath told me what an English heart beats here!
Know you what injuries the King of Spain
Hath done us?" Drake looked up at her: she smiled,
"We find you apt! Will you not be our knight
For we are helpless"—witchingly she smiled—
"We are not ripe for war; our policy
Must still be to uphold the velvet cloak
Of peace; but I would have it mask the hand
That holds the dagger! Will you not unfold
Your scheme to us?" And then with a low bow

Walsingham, at a signal from the Queen,
Withdrew; and she looked down at Drake and smiled;
And in his great simplicity the man
Spake all his heart out like some youthful knight
Before his Gloriana: his heart burned,
Knowing he talked with England, face to face;
And suddenly the Queen bent down to him,
England bent down to him, and his heart reeled
With the beauty of her presence—for indeed
Women alone have royal power like this
Within their very selves enthroned and shrined
To draw men's hearts out! Royal she bent down
And touched his hand for a moment. "Friend," she said,
Looking into his face with subtle eyes,
"I have searched thy soul to-night and know full well
How I can trust thee! Canst thou think that I,
The daughter of my royal father, lack
The fire which every boor in England feels
Burning within him as the bloody score
Which Spain writes on the flesh of Englishmen
Mounts higher day by day? Am I not Tudor?
I am not deaf or blind; nor yet a king!
I am a woman and a queen, and where
Kings would have plunged into their red revenge
Or set their throne up on this temporal shore,
As flatterers bade that wiser king Canúte,
Thence to command the advancing tides of battle
Till one ensanguined sea whelm throne and king
And kingdom; friend, I take my woman's way,
Smile in mine enemies' faces with a heart
All hell, and undermine them hour by hour!
This island scarce can fend herself from France,
And now Spain holds the keys of all the world,
How should we fight her, save that my poor wit
Hath won the key to Philip? Oh, I know
His treacherous lecherous heart, and hour by hour
My nets are drawing round him. I, that starve
My public armies, feed his private foes,

Nourish his rebels in the Netherlands,
Nay, sacrifice mine own poor woman's heart
To keep him mine—there is no sacrifice
On earth like this—and surely now stands Fate
With hand uplifted by the doors of Spain
Ready to knock: the time is close at hand
When I shall strike, once, and no second stroke.
Remember, friend, though kings have fought for her,
This England, with the trident in her grasp,
Was ever woman; and she waits her throne;
And thou canst speed it. Furnish thee with ships,
Gather thy gentleman adventurers,
And be assured thy parsimonious queen—
Oh ay, she knows that chattering of the world—
Will find thee wealth enough. Then put to sea,
Fly the black flag of piracy awhile
Against these blackest foes of all mankind.
Nay; what hast thou to do with piracy?
Hostis humani generis indeed
Is Spain: she dwells beyond the bounds of law;
Thine is no piracy, whate'er men say,
Thou art a knight on Gloriana's quest.
Oh, lay that golden unction to thy soul,
This is no piracy, but glorious war,
Waged for thy country and for all mankind,
Therefore put out to sea without one fear,
Ransack their El Dorados of the West,
Pillage their golden galleons, sap their strength
Even at its utmost fountains; let them know
That there is blood, not water, in our veins.
Carry thy scheme out to the glorious end,
And, though at first thou needs must ride alone
And unsupported, ere that end is reached,
When I shall give the word, nay, but one word,
All England shall be up and after thee,
The sword of England shall shine over thee,
And round about thee like a guardian fire;
All the great soul of England shall be there;

Her mighty dead shall at that cry of doom
Rise from their graves and in God's panoply
Plunge with our standards through immortal storms
When Drake rides out across the wreck of Rome.
As yet we must be cautious; let no breath
Escape thee, save to thy most trusted friends;
For now, if my lord Burleigh heard one word
Of all thou hast in mind, he is so much
The friend of caution and the beaten road,
He would not rest till he had wrecked thy hopes
And sealed thy doom! Go now, fit out thy ships.
Walsingham is empowered to give thee gold
Immediately, but look to him for more
As thou shalt need it, gold and gold to spare,
My golden-hearted pilot to the shores
Of Empire—so farewell;" and through the gloom
She vanished as she came; and Drake groped, dazed,
Out through the doors, and found great Walsingham
Awaiting him with gold.

But in the room
Where Drake had held his converse with the Queen
The embroidered arras moved, and a lean face,
White with its long eavesdropping upon death,
Crept out and peered as a venomous adder peers
From out dark ferns, then as the reptile flashes
Along a path between two banks of flowers
Almost too swift for sight, a stealthy form
—One of the fifty spies whom Burleigh paid—
Passed down the gold-gloomed corridor to seek
His master, whom among great books he found,
Calm, like a mountain brooding o'er the sea.
Nor did he break that calm for all these winds
Of rumour that now burst from out the sky.
His brow bent like a cliff over his thoughts,
And the spy watched him half resentfully,
Thinking his news well worth a blacker frown.
At last the statesman smiled and answered, "Go;
Fetch Thomas Doughty, Leicester's secretary."

Few suns had risen and set ere Francis Drake
Had furnished forth his ships with guns and men,
Tried seamen that he knew in storms of old,—
Will Harvest, who could haul the ropes and fight
All day, and sing a foc'sle song to cheer
Sea-weary hearts at night; brave old Tom Moone
The carpenter, whose faithful soul looked up
To Drake's large mastery with a mastiff's eyes;
And three-score trusty mariners, all scarred
And weather-beaten. After these there came
Some two-score gentleman adventurers,
Gay college lads or lawyers that had grown
Sick of the dusty Temple, and were fired
With tales of the rich Indies and those tall
Enchanted galleons drifting through the West,
Laden with ingots and broad bars of gold.
Already some had bought at a great price
Green birds of Guatemala, which they wore
On their slouched hats, tasting the high romance
And new-found colours of the world like wine.
By night they gathered in a marvellous inn
Beside the black and secret flowing Thames;
And joyously they tossed the magic phrase
"Pieces of eight" from mouth to mouth, and laughed
And held the red wine up, night after night,
Around their tables, toasting Francis Drake.
Among these came a courtier, and none knew
Or asked by whose approval, for each thought
Some other brought him; yet he made his way
Cautiously, being a man with a smooth tongue,
The secretary of Leicester; and his name
Was Thomas Doughty. Most of all with Drake
He won his way to friendship, till at last
There seemed one heart between them and one soul

BOOK II.

So on a misty grey December morn
Five ships put out from calm old Plymouth Sound;
Five little ships, the largest not so large
As many a coasting yacht or fishing-trawl
To-day; yet these must brave uncharted seas
Of unimagined terrors, haunted glooms,
And shadowy horrors of an unknown world
Wild as primæval chaos. In the first,
The *Golden Hynde*, a ship of eighteen guns,
Drake sailed: John Wynter, a queen's captain, next
Brought out the *Elizabeth*, a stout new ship
Of sixteen guns. The pinnace *Christopher*
Came next, in staunch command of old Tom Moone
Who, five years back, with reeking powder grimed,
Off Cartagena fought against the stars
All night, and, as the sun arose in blood,
Knee-deep in blood and brine, stood in the dark
Perilous hold and scuttled his own ship
The *Swan*, bidding her down to God's great deep
Rather than yield her up a prize to Spain.
Lastly two gentleman-adventurers
Brought out the new *Swan* and the *Marygold*.
Their crews, all told, were eight score men and boys.
Not only terrors of the deep they braved,
Bodiless witchcrafts of the black abyss,
Red gaping mouths of hell and gulfs of fire
That yawned for all who passed the tropic line;

But death lurked round them from their setting forth.
Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain,
By spies informed, had swiftly warned his king,
Who sent out mandates through his huge empire
From Guadalchiber to the golden West
For the instant sinking of all English ships
And the instant execution of their crews
Who durst appear in the Caribbean sea.
Moreover, in the pith of their emprise
A peril lurked—Burleigh's emissaries,
The smooth-tongued Thomas Doughty, who had brought
His brother—unacquitted of that charge
Of poisoning, raised against him by the friends
Of Essex, but in luckless time released
Lately for lack of proof, on no strong plea.
These two wound through them like two snakes at ease
In Eden, waiting for their venomous hour.
Especially did Thomas Doughty toil
With soft and flowery tongue to win his way;
And Drake, whose rich imagination craved
For something more than simple seamans' talk,
Was marvellously drawn to this new friend
Who with the scholar's mind, the courtier's gloss,
The lawyer's wit, the adventurer's romance,
Gold honey from the blooms of Euphues,
Rare flashes from the *Mermaid* and sweet smiles
Copied from Sidney's self, even to the glance
Of sudden, liquid sympathy, gave Drake
That banquet of the soul he ne'er had known
Nor needed till he knew, but needed now.
So to the light of Doughty's answering eyes
He poured his inmost thoughts out, hour by hour;
And Doughty coiled up in the heart of Drake.

Against such odds the tiny fleet set sail;
Yet gallantly and with heroic pride,
Escutcheoned pavisades, emblazoned poops,

Banners and painted shields and close-fights hung
With scarlet broideries. Every polished gun
Grinned through the jaws of some heraldic beast,
Gilded and carven and gleaming with all hues;
While in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*
Rich perfumes floated, given by the great Queen
Herself to Drake as Captain-General;
So that it seemed her soul was with the fleet,
A presence to remind him, far away,
Of how he talked with England, face to face,—
No pirate he, but Gloriana's knight.
Silver and gold his table furniture,
Engraved and richly chased, lavishly gleamed
While, fanned by favouring airs, the ships advanced
With streaming flags and ensigns and sweet chords
Of music struck by skilled musicians
Whom Drake brought with him, not from vanity,
But knowing how the pulse of men beats high
To music; and the hearts of men like these
Were open to the high romance of earth,
And they that dwelt so near God's mystery
Were proud of their own manhood. They went out
To danger as to a sweetheart far away,
Who even now was drawing the western clouds
Like a cymar of silk and snow-white furs
Close to her, till her body's beauty seemed
Clad in a mist of kisses. They desired
Her glittering petulance and her sulky sweet
Red pouts of anger. They went out to her
With pomp and ceremony, richly attired
And girt about with honour as befit
Souls that might talk with angels by the way.

Light as the sea-birds dipping their white wings
In foam before the gently heaving prows
Each heart beat, while the low soft lapping splash
Of water racing past them ripped and tore

Whiter and faster, and the bellying sails
Filled out, and the white cliffs of England sank
Dwindling behind the broad grey plains of sea.
Meekly content and tamely stay-at-home
The sea-birds seemed that piped across the waves;
And Drake, be-mused, leaned smiling to his friend
Doughty and said, "Is it not strange to know
When we return yon speckled herring-gulls
Will still be wheeling, dipping, flashing there?
We shall not find a fairer land afar
Than those thyme-scented hills we leave behind!
Soon the young lambs will bleat across the combes,
And breezes will bring puffs of hawthorn scent
Down Devon lanes; over the purple moors
Lavrocks will carol; and on the village greens
Around the May-pole, while the moon hangs low,
The boys and girls of England merrily swing
In country footing through the flowery dance.
But many of us indeed shall not return.
Then the other with a laugh, "Nay, like the man
Who slept a hundred years we shall return
And find our England strange: there are great storms
Brewing; God only knows what we shall find—
Perchance a Spanish king upon the throne!
What then?" And Drake, "I should put down my helm,
And out once more to the unknown golden West
To die, as I have lived, an Englishman."
So said he, while the white cliffs dwindled down,
Faded, and vanished; but the prosperous wind
Carried the five ships onward over the swell
Of swinging, sweeping seas, till the sun sank,
And height o'er height the chaos of the skies
Broke out into the miracle of the stars.
Frostily glittering, all the Milky Way
Lay bare like diamond-dust upon the robe
Of some great king. Orion and the Plough
Glimmered through drifting gulfs of silver fleece,

And, far away, in Italy, that night
Young Galileo, looking upward, heard
The self-same whisper through that wild abyss
Which now called Drake out to the unknown West.
But, after supper, Drake came up on deck
With Doughty, and on the cold poop as they leaned
And gazed across the rolling gleam and gloom
Of mighty muffled seas, began to give
Voice to those lovely captives of the brain
Which, like princesses in some forest-tower,
Still yearn for the delivering prince, the sweet
Far bugle-note that calls from answering minds.
He told him how, in those dark days which now
Seemed like an evil dream, when the Princess
Elizabeth even trembled for her life
And read there, by the gleam of Smithfield fires,
Those cunning lessons of diplomacy
Which saved her then and now for England's sake,
He passed his youth. 'Twas when the power of Spain
Began to light the gloom with that great glare
Of martyrdrom which, while the stars endure,
Bears witness how men overcame the world,
Trod the red flames beneath their feet like flowers,
Yea, cast aside the blackening robe of flesh,
While with a crown of joy upon their heads,
Even as into a palace, they passed through
The portals of the tomb to prove their love
Stronger at least than death: and, in those days
A Puritan, with iron in his soul,
Having in earlier manhood occupied
His business in great waters and beheld
The bloody cowls of the Inquisition pass
Before the midnight moon as he kept watch;
And having then forsworn the steely sea
To dwell at home in England with his love
At Tavistock in Devon, Edmund Drake
Began, albeit too near the Abbey walls,

To speak too staunchly for his ancient faith;
And with his young child Francis, had to flee
By night at last for shelter to the coast.
Little the boy remembered of that flight,
Pillioned behind his father, save the clang
And clatter of the hoofs on stony ground
Striking a sharp blue fire, while country tales
Of highwaymen kindled his reckless heart
As the great steed went shouldering through the night.
There Francis, laying a little sunburnt hand
On the big holstered pistol at each side,
Dreamed with his wide grey eyes that he himself
Was riding out on some freebooting quest,
And felt himself heroic. League by league
The magic world rolled past him as they rode,
Leaving him nothing but a memory
Of his own making. Vaguely he perceived
A thousand meadows darkly streaming by
With clouds of perfume from their secret flowers,
A wayside cottage-window pointing out
A golden finger o'er the purple road;
A puff of garden roses or a waft
Of honeysuckle blown along a wood,
While overhead that silver ship, the moon,
Sailed slowly down the gulfs of glittering stars,
Till, at the last, a buffet of fresh wind
Fierce with sharp savours of the stinging brine
Against his dreaming face brought up a roar
Of mystic welcome from the Channel seas.
And there Drake paused for a moment, as a song
Stole o'er the waters from the *Marygold*
Where some musician, striking luscious chords
Of sweet-stringed music, freed his heart's desire
In symbols of the moment, which the rest,
And Doughty among them, scarce could understand.

SONG.

The moon is up: the stars are bright:
The wind is fresh and free!
We're out to seek for gold to-night
Across the silver sea!
The world was growing grey and old:
Break out the sails again!
We're out to seek a Realm of Gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.

We're sick of all the cringing knees,
The courtly smiles and lies!
God, let Thy singing Channel breeze
Lighten our hearts and eyes!
Let love no more be bought and sold
For earthly loss or gain;
We're out to seek an Age of Gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.

Beyond the light of far Cathay,
Beyond all mortal dreams,
Beyond the reach of night and day
Our El Dorado gleams,
Revealing—as the skies unfold—
A star without a stain,
The Glory of the Gates of Gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.

And, as the skilled musician made the words
Of momentary meaning still imply
His own eternal hope and heart's desire,
Without belief, perchance, in Drake's own quest—
To Drake's own greater mind the eternal glory

Seemed to transfigure his immediate hope.
But Doughty only heard a sweet concourse
Of sounds. They ceased. And Drake resumed his tale
Of that strange flight in boyhood to the sea.
Next, the red-curtained inn and kindly hands
Of Protestant Plymouth held his memory long;
Often in strange and distant dreams he saw
That scene which now he tenderly pourtrayed
To Doughty's half-ironic smiling lips,
Half-sympathetic eyes; he saw again
That small inn parlour with the homely fare
Set forth upon the table, saw the gang
Of seamen reeking from the spray come in,
Like great new thoughts to some adventurous brain.
Feeding his wide grey eyes he saw them stand
Around the crimson fire and stamp their feet
And scatter the salt drops from their big sea-boots;
And all that night he lay awake and heard
Mysterious thunderings of eternal tides
Moaning out of a cold and houseless gloom
Beyond the world, that made it seem most sweet
To slumber in a little four-walled inn
Immune from all that vastness. But at dawn
He woke, he leapt from bed, he ran and lookt,
There, through the tiny high bright casement, there,—
Oh, fairy vision of that small boy's face
Peeping at daybreak through the diamond pane!—
There first he saw the wondrous new-born world,
And round its princely shoulders wildly flowing,
Gemmed with a myriad clusters of the sun,
The magic azure mantle of the sea.

And, afterwards, there came those marvellous days
When, on that battleship, a disused hulk
Rotting to death in Chatham Reach, they found
Sanctuary and a dwelling-place at last.
For Hawkins, that great ship-man, being their friend,

A Protestant, with power on Plymouth town,
Nigh half whereof he owned, made Edmund Drake
Reader of prayer to all the ships of war
That lay therein. So there the dreaming boy,
Francis, grew up in that grim nursery
Among the ropes and masts and great dumb mouths
Of idle ordnance. In that hulk he heard
Many a time his father and his friends
Over some wild-eyed troop of refugees
Thunder against the powers of Spain and Rome,
"Idolaters who defiled the House of God
In England;" and all round them, as he heard,
The clang and clatter of shipwright hammers rang,
And hour by hour upon his vision rose,
In solid oak reality, new ships,
As Ilion rose to music, ships of war,
The visible shapes and symbols of his dream,
Unconscious yet, but growing as they grew,
A wondrous incarnation, hour by hour,
Till with their towering masts they stood complete,
Embodied thoughts, in God's own dockyards built,
For Drake ere long to lead against the world.

There, as to round the tale with ringing gold,
Across the waters from the full-plumed *Swan*
The music of a *Mermaid* roundelay—
Our Lady of the Sea, a Dorian theme
Tuned to the soul of England—charmed the moon.

SONG.

I.

Queen Venus wandered away with a cry,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—
For the purple wound in Adon's thigh;
Je vous en prie, pity me;

With a bitter farewell from sky to sky,
And a moan, a moan from sea to sea;
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

II.

The soft Ægean heard her sigh,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—
Heard the Spartan hills reply,
Je vous en prie, pity me;
Spain was aware of her drawing nigh
Foot-gilt from the blossoms of Italy;
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

III.

In France they heard her voice go by,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—
And on the May-wind droop and die,
Je vous en prie, pity me;
Your maidens choose their loves, but I—
White as I came from the foam-white sea,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

IV.

The warm red-meal-winged butterfly,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—
Beat on her breast in the golden rye,—
Je vous en prie, pity me,—

Stained her breast with a dusty dye
Red as the print of a kiss might be!
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

V.

Is there no land, afar or nigh,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—
But dreads the kiss o' the sea? Ah, why—
Je vous en prie, pity me!—
Why will ye cling to the loves that die?
Is earth all Adon to my plea?
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

VI.

Under the warm blue summer sky,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—
With outstretched arms and a low long sigh,—
Je vous en prie, pity me;—
Over the Channel they saw her fly
To the white-cliffed island that crowns the sea,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

VII.

England laughed as her queen drew nigh,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?
To the white-walled cottages gleaming high,
Je vous en prie, pity me!

They drew her in with a joyful cry
To the hearth where she sits with a babe on her knee,
She has turned her moan to a lullaby,
She is nursing a son to the kings of the sea,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N oserez vous, mon bel ami?

Such memories, on the plunging *Golden Hynde*,
Under the stars, Drake drew before his friend,
Clomb for a moment to that peak of vision,
That purple peak of Darien, laughing aloud
O'er those wild exploits down to Rio Grande
Which even now had made his fierce renown
Terrible to all lonely ships of Spain.
E'en now, indeed, that poet of Portugal,
Lope de Vega, filled with this new fear
Began to meditate his epic muse
Till, like a cry of panic from his lips,
He shrilled the faint *Dragontea* forth, wherein
Drake is that Dragon of the Apocalypse,
The dread Antagonist of God and Man.

Well had it been for Doughty on that night
Had he not heard what followed; for, indeed,
When two minds clash, not often does the less
Conquer the greater; but, without one thought
Of evil, seeing they now were safe at sea,
Drake told him, only somewhat, yet too much,
Of that close conference with the Queen. And lo,
The face of Doughty blanched with a slow thought
That crept like a cold worm through all his brain,
"Thus much I knew, though secretly, before;
But here he freely tells me as his friend;
If I am false and he is what they say,
His knowledge of my knowledge will mean death."
But Drake looked round at Doughty with a smile
And said, "Forgive me now: thou art not used

To these cold nights at sea! thou tremblest, friend;
Let us go down and drink a cup of sack
To our return!" And at that kindly smile
Doughty shook off his nightmare mood, and thought,
"I am no sea-dog, but a man of birth!
The yard-arm is for dogs, not gentlemen!
Even Drake would not misuse a man of birth!"
And in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*
Revolving subtle treacheries he sat.
There with the sugared phrases of the court
And general sentiments which Drake believed
Were revelations of the man's own mind,
Bartering beads for gold, he drew out all
The simple Devon seaman's inmost heart,
And coiled up in the soul of Francis Drake.
There in the solemn night they interchanged
Lies for sweet confidences. From one wall
The picture of Drake's love looked down on him;
And, like a bashful schoolboy's, that bronzed face
Flushed as he blurted out with brightening eyes
And quickening breath how he had seen her first,
Crowned on the village green, a Queen of May.
Her name, too, was Elizabeth, he said,
As if it proved that she, too, was a queen,
Though crowned with milk-white Devon may alone,
And queen but of one plot of meadow-sweet.
As yet, he said, he had only kissed her hand,
Smiled in her eyes and—there Drake also flinched,
Thinking, "I ne'er may see her face again,"
And Doughty comforted his own dark heart
Thinking, "I need not fear so soft a soul
As this"; and yet, he wondered how the man,
Seeing his love so gripped him, none the less
Could leave her, thus to follow after dreams;
For faith to Doughty was an unknown word,
And trustfulness the property of fools.
At length they parted, each to his own couch,

Doughty with half a chuckle, Francis Drake
With one old-fashioned richly grateful prayer
Blessing all those he loved, as he had learnt
Beside his mother's knee in Devon days.

So all night long they sailed; but when a rift
Of orchard crimson broke the yellowing gloom
And barred the closely clouded East with dawn,
Behold, a giant galleon overhead,
Lifting its huge black shining sides on high,
Loomed like some misty monster of the deep:
And, sullenly rolling out great gorgeous folds
Over her rumbled like a thunder-cloud
The heavy flag of Spain. The splendid poop,
Mistily lustrous as a dragon's hoard
Seen in some magic cave-mouth o'er the sea
Through shimmering April sunlight after rain,
Blazed to the morning; and her port-holes grinned
With row on row of cannon. There at once
One sharp shrill whistle sounded, and those five
Small ships, mere minnows clinging to the flanks
Of that Leviathan, unseen, unheard,
Undreamt of, grappled her. She seemed asleep,
Swinging at ease with great half-slackened sails,
Majestically careless of the dawn.
There in the very native seas of Spain,
There with the yeast and foam of her proud cliffs,
Her own blue coasts, in sight across the waves,
Up her Titanic sides without a sound
The naked-footed British seamen swarmed
With knives between their teeth: then on her decks
They dropped like panthers, and the softly fierce
Black-bearded watch of Spaniards, all amazed,
Rubbing their eyes as if at a wild dream,
Upraised a sudden shout, *El Draque! El Draque!*
And flashed their weapons out, but all too late;
For, ere their sleeping comrades reached the deck,

The little watch, out-numbered and out-matched,
Lay bound, and o'er the hatches everywhere
The points of naked cutlasses on guard
Gleamed, and without a struggle those below
Gave up their arms, their poignards jewelled thick
With rubies, and their blades of Spanish steel.

Then onward o'er the great grey gleaming sea
They swept with their rich booty, night and day.
Five other prizes, one for every ship,
Out of the seas of Spain they suddenly caught
And carried with them, laughing as they went—
"Now, now indeed the Rubicon is crossed;
Now have we singed the eyelids and the beard
Of Spain; now have we roused the hornet's nest;
Now shall we sail against a world in arms;
Now we have nought between us and black death
But our own hands, five ships, and three score guns."
So laughed they, plunging through the bay of storms,
Biscay, and past Gibraltar, not yet clothed
With British thunder, though, as one might dream,
Gazing in dim prophetic grandeur out
Across the waves while that small fleet went by,
Or watching them with love's most wistful fear
As they plunged Southward to the lonely coasts
Of Africa, till right in front up-soared,
Tremendous over ocean, Teneriffe,
Cloud-robed, but crowned with colours of the dawn.

Already those two traitors were at work,
Doughty and his false brother, among the crews,
Who knew not yet the vastness of their quest,
Nor dreamed of aught beyond the accustomed world;
For Drake had kept it secret, and the thoughts
Of some that he had shipped before the mast
Set sail scarce farther than for Mogadore
In West Morocco, or at the utmost mark

For northern Egypt, by the midnight woods
And crystal palace roofed with chrysoprase
Where Prester John had reigned five hundred years,
And Sydon, river of jewels, through the dark
Enchanted gorges rolled its rays along!
Some thought of Rio Grande; but scarce to ten
The true intent was known; while to divert
The rest from care the skilled musicians played.
But those two Doughtys cunningly devised
By chance-dropt words to breathe a hint abroad;
And through the foc'sles crept a grisly fear
Of things that lay beyond the bourne of earth,
Till even those hardy seamen almost quailed;
And now, at any moment, they might turn
With terror in their eyes. They might refuse
To sail into that fabled burning Void
Or brave that *primum mobile* which drew
O'er-daring ships into the jaws of hell
Beyond the Pole Antarticke, where the sea
Rushed down through fiery mountains, and no sail
Could e'er return against its roaring stream.

Now down the coast of Barbary they cruised
Till Christmas Eve embraced them in the heart
Of summer. In a bay of mellow calm
They moored, and as the fragrant twilight brought
The stars, the sound of song and dance arose;
And down the shores in stealthy silence crept,
Out of the massy forest's emerald gloom,
The naked, dark-limbed children of the night,
Unseen, to gaze upon the floating glare
Of revelry; unheard, to hear that strange
New music of the gods, where o'er the soft
Ripple and wash of the lanthorn-crimsoned tide
Will Harvest's voice above the chorus rang.

SONG.

In Devonshire, now, the Christmas chime
Is carolling over the lea;
And the sexton shovels away the snow
From the old church porch, maybe;
And the waits with their lanthorns and noses a-glow
Come round for their Christmas fee;
But, as in old England it's Christmas-time,
Why, so is it here at sea,
My lads,
Why, so is it here at sea!

When the ship comes home, from turret to poop
Filled full with Spanish gold,
There'll be many a country dance and joke,
And many a tale to be told;
Every old woman shall have a red cloak
To fend her against the cold;
And every old man shall have a big round stoup
Of jolly good ale and old,
My lads,
Jolly good ale and old!

But on the morrow came a prosperous wind
Whereof they took advantage, and shook out
The flashing sails, and held their Christmas feast
Upon the swirling ridges of the sea:
And, sweeping Southward with full many a rouse
And shout of laughter, at the fall of day,
While the black prows drove, leapt, and plunged, and ploughed
Through the broad dazzle of sunset-coloured tides,
Outside the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*,
Where Drake and his chief captains dined in state,
The skilled musicians made a great new song.

Song.

I.

Happy by the hearth sit the lasses and the lads, now,
Roasting of their chestnuts, toasting of their toes!
When the door is opened to a blithe new-comer,
Stamping like a ploughman to shuffle off the snows;
Rosy flower-like faces through the soft red firelight
Float as if to greet us, far away at sea,
Sigh as they remember, and turn the sigh to laughter,
Kiss beneath the mistletoe and wonder at their glee.
With their "heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!"
Christmas-time is kissing-time,
Away with melancholy!

II.

Ah, the Yule of England, the happy Yule of England,
Yule of berried holly and the merry mistletoe;
The boar's head, the brown ale, the blue snapdragon,
Yule of groaning tables and the crimson log aglow!
Yule, the golden bugle to the scattered old companions,
Ringing as with laughter, shining as through tears!
Loved of little children, oh guard the holy Yuletide,
Guard it, men of England, for the child beyond the years.
With its "heigh ho, the holly!"
Away with melancholy!
Christmas-time is kissing-time,
"This life is most jolly!"

Now to the Fortunate Islands of old time
They came, and found no glory as of old
Encircling them, no red ineffable calm
Of sunset round crowned faces pale with bliss
Like evening stars; but rugged, waste, and wild

Those isles were when they neared them, though afar
They beautifully smouldered in the sun
Like dusky purple jewels fringed and frayed
With silver foam across that ancient sea
Of wonder. On the largest of the seven
Drake landed Doughty with his musketeers
To exercise their weapons and to seek
Supplies among the matted uncouth huts
Which, as the ships drew round each ragged cliff,
Crept like remembered misery into sight;
Oh, like the strange dull waking from a dream
They blotted out the rosy courts and fair
Imagined marble thresholds of the King
Achilles and the heroes that were gone.
But Drake cared nought for these things. Such a heart
He had, to make each utmost ancient bourne
Of man's imagination but a point
Of new departure for his Golden Dream.
But Doughty with his men ashore, alone,
Among the sparse wind-bitten groves of palm,
Kindled their fears of all they must endure
On that immense adventure. Nay, sometimes
He hinted of a voyage far beyond
All history and fable, far beyond
Even that Void whence only two returned,—
Columbus, with his men in mutiny;
Magellan, who could only hound his crew
Onward by threats of death, until they turned
In horror from the Threat that lay before,
Preferring to be hanged as mutineers
Rather than venture farther. Nor indeed
Did even Magellan at the last return;
But, with all hell around him, in the clutch
Of devils died upon some savage isle
By poisonous black enchantment. Not in vain
Were Doughty's words on that volcanic shore
Among the stunted dark acacia trees,
Whose heads, all bent one way by the trade-wind,

Pointed North-east by North, South-west by West
Ambiguous sibyls that with wizened arms
Mysteriously declared a twofold path,
Homeward or onward. But aboard the ships,
Among the hardier seamen, Old Tom Moone,
With one or two stout comrades, overbore
All doubts and questionings with blither tales
Of how they sailed to Darien and heard
Nightingales in November all night long
As down a coast like Paradise they cruised
Through seas of lasting summer, Eden isles,
Where birds like rainbows, butterflies like gems,
And flowers like coloured fires o'er fairy creeks
Floated and flashed beneath the shadowy palms ;
While ever and anon a bark canoe
With naked Indian maidens flower-festooned
Put out from shadowy coves, laden with fruit
Ambrosial o'er the silken shimmering sea.
And once a troop of nut-brown maidens came—
So said Tom Moone, a twinkle in his eye—
Swimming to meet them through the warm blue waves
And wantoned through the water, like those nymphs
Which one green April at the Mermaid Inn
Should hear Kit Marlowe mightily pourtray,
Among his boon companions, in a song
Of Love that swam the sparkling Hellespont
Upheld by nymphs, not lovelier than these,—
Though whiter yet not lovelier than these ;
For those like flowers, but these like rounded fruit
Rosily ripening through the clear tides tossed
From nut-brown breast and arm all round the ship
The thousand-coloured spray. Shapely of limb
They were ; but as they laid their small brown hands
Upon the ropes we cast them, Captain Drake
Suddenly thundered at them and bade them pack
For a troop of naughty wenches ! At that tale
A tempest of fierce laughter rolled around
The foc'sle ; but one boy from London town,

A pale-faced prentice, run-away to sea,
Asking why Drake had bidden them pack so soon,
Tom Moone turned to him with his deep-sea growl,
"Because our Captain is no pink-eyed boy
Nor soft-limbed Spaniard, but a staunch-souled Man,
Full-blooded; nerved like iron; with a girl
He loves at home in Devon; and a mind
For ever bent upon some mighty goal,
I know not what—but 'tis enough for me
To know my Captain knows." And then he told
How sometimes o'er the gorgeous forest gloom
Some marble city, rich, mysterious, white,
An ancient treasure-house of Aztec kings,
Or palace of forgotten Incas gleamed;
And in their dim rich lofty cellars gold,
Beyond all wildest dreams, great bars of gold,
Like pillars, tossed in mighty chaos, gold
And precious stones, agate and emerald,
Diamond, sapphire, ruby, and sardonyx.
So said he, as they waited the return
Of Doughty, resting in the foc'sle gloom,
Or idly couched about the sun-swept decks
On sails or coils of rope, while overhead
Some boy would climb the rigging and look out,
Arching his hand to see if Doughty came.
But when he came, he came with a strange face
Of feigned despair; and with a stammering tongue
He vowed he could not find those poor supplies
Which Drake himself in other days had found
Upon that self-same island. But, perchance,
This was a barren year, he said. And Drake
Looked at him, suddenly, and at the musketeers.
Their eyes were strained; their faces wore a cloud.
That night he said no more; but on the morn,
Mistrusting nothing, Drake with subtle sense
Of weather-wisdom, through that little fleet
Distributed his crews anew. And all
The prisoners and the prizes at those isles

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They left behind them, taking what they would
From out their carven cabins,—glimmering silks,
Chiselled Toledo blades, and broad doubloons.
And lo, as they weighed anchor, far away
Behind them on the blue horizon line
It seemed a city of towering masts arose;
And from the crow's nest of the *Golden Hynde*
A seaman cried, "By God; the hunt is up!"
And like a tide of triumph through their veins
The red rejoicing blood began to race
As there they saw the avenging ships of Spain,
Eight mighty galleons, nosing out their trail.
And Drake growled, "Oh, my lads of Bideford,
It cuts my heart to show the hounds our heels;
But we must not emperil our great quest!
Such fights as that must wait—as our reward
When we return. Yet I will not put on
One stitch of sail. So, lest they are not too slow
To catch us, clear the decks. God, I would like
To fight them!" So the little fleet advanced
With decks all cleared and shotted guns and men
Bare-armed beside them, hungering to be caught,
And quite distracted from their former doubts;
For danger, in that kind, they never feared.
But soon the heavy Spaniards dropped behind;
And not in vain had Thomas Doughty sown
The seeds of doubt; for many a brow grew black
With sullen-seeming care that erst was gay.
But happily and in good time there came,
Not from behind them now, but right in front,
On the first sun-down of their quest renewed,
Just as the sea grew dark around their ships,
A chance that loosed heart-gnawing doubt in deeds.
For through a mighty zone of golden haze
Blotting the purple of the gathering night
A galleon like a floating mountain moved
To meet them, clad with sunset and with dreams.
Her masts and spars immense in jewelled mist

Shimmered: her rigging, like an emerald web
Of golden spiders, tangled half the stars!
Embodied sunset, dragging the soft sky
O'er dazzled ocean, through the night she drew
Out of the unknown lands; and round a prow
That jutted like a moving promontory
Over a cloven wilderness of foam,
Upon a lofty blazoned scroll her name
San Salvador challenged obsequious isles
Where'er she rode; who kneeling like dark slaves
Before some great Sultàn must lavish forth
From golden cornucopias, East and West,
Red streams of rubies, cataracts of pearl.
But, at a signal from their admiral, all
Those five small ships lay silent in the gloom
Which, just as if some god were on their side,
Covered them in the dark troughs of the waves,
Letting her pass to leeward. On she came,
Blazing with lights, a City of the Sea,
Belted with crowding towers and clouds of sail,
And round her bows a long-drawn thunder rolled
Splendid with foam; but ere she passed them by
Drake gave the word, and with one crimson flash
Two hundred yards of black and hidden sea
Leaped into sight between them as the roar
Of twenty British cannon shattered the night.
Then after her they drove, like black sea-wolves
Behind some royal high-branched stag of ten,
Hanging upon those bleeding foam-flecked flanks,
Leaping, snarling, worrying, as they went
In full flight down the wind; for those light ships
Much speedier than their huge antagonist,
Keeping to windward, worked their will with her.
In vain she burnt wild lights and strove to scan
The darkening deep. Her musketeers in vain
Provoked the crackling night with random fires:
In vain her broadside bellowings burst at large
As if the Gates of Erebus unrolled.

For ever and anon the deep-sea gloom
From some new quarter, like a dragon's mouth
Opened and belched forth crimson flames and tore
Her sides as if with iron claws unseen;
Till, all at once, rough voices close at hand
Out of the darkness thundered, "Grapple her!"
And, falling on their knees, the Spaniards knew
The Dragon of that red Apocalypse.
There with one awful cry, *El Draque! El Draque!*
They cast their weapons from them; for the moon
Rose, eastward, and against her rising black
Over the bloody bulwarks Francis Drake,
Grasping the great hilt of his naked sword,
Towered for a moment to their startled eyes
Through all the zenith like the King of Hell.
Then he leaped down upon their shining decks,
And after him swarmed and towered and leapt in haste
A brawny band of three score Englishmen,
Gigantic as they loomed against the sky
And risen, it seemed, by miracle from the sea.
So small were those five ships below the walls
Of that huge floating mountain. Royally
Drake, from the swart commander's trembling hands
Took the surrendered sword, and bade his men
Gather the fallen weapons on an heap,
And placed a guard about them, while the moon
Silvering the rolling seas for many a mile
Glanced on the huddled Spaniards' rich attire,
As like one picture of despair they grouped
Under the splintered main-mast's creaking shrouds,
And the great swinging shadows of the sails
Mysteriously swept the gleaming decks;
Where many a butt of useless cannon gloomed
Along the accoutred bulwarks or upturned,
As the ship wallowed in the heaving deep,
Dumb mouths of empty menace to the stars.

Then Drake appointed Doughty, with a guard,

To sail the prize on to the next dim isle
Where they might leave her, taking aught they would
From out her carven cabins and rich holds.
And Doughty's heart leaped in him as he thought,
"I have my chance at last"; but Drake, who still
Trusted the man, made surety doubly sure,
And in his wary weather-wisdom sent
—Even as a breathing type of friendship, sent—
His brother, Thomas Drake, aboard the prize;
But set his brother, his own flesh and blood,
Beneath the man, as if to say, "I give
My loyal friend dominion over me."
So courteously he dealt with him; but he,
Seeing his chance once more slipping away,
Raged inwardly and, from his own false heart
Imputing his own evil, he contrived
A cunning charge that night; and when they came
Next day, at noon, upon the destined isle,
He suddenly spat the secret venom forth,
With such fierce wrath in his defeated soul
That he himself almost believed the charge.
For when Drake stepped on the *San Salvador*
To order all things duly about the prize,
What booty they must keep and what let go,
Doughty received him with a blustering voice
Of red mock-righteous wrath, "Is this the way
Englishmen play the pirate, Francis Drake?
While thou wast dreaming of thy hero's crown—
God save the mark!—thy brother, nay, thy spy,
Must play the common pilferer, must convert
The cargo to his uses, rob us all
Of what we risked our necks to win: he wears
The ransom of an emperor round his throat
That might enrich us all. Who saw him wear
That chain of rubies ere last night?"
And Drake,
"Answer him, brother;" and his brother smiled
And answered, "Nay, I never wore this chain

Before last night; but Doughty knows, indeed,
For he was with me—and none else was there
But Doughty—'tis my word against his word,
That close on midnight we were summoned down
To an English seaman who lay dying below
Unknown to any of us, a prisoner
In chains, that had been captured none knew where,
For all his mind was far from Darien,
And wandering evermore through Devon lanes
At home; whom we released; and from his waist
He took this hidden chain and gave it me,
Begging me that if ever I returned
To Bideford in Devon I would go
With whatsoever wealth it might produce
To his old mother who, with wrinkled hands
In some small white-washed cottage o'er the sea,
Where wall-flowers bloom in April, even now
Is turning pages of the well-worn Book
And praying for her son's return, nor knows
That he lies cold upon the heaving main.
But this he asked; and this in all good faith
I swore to do; and even now he died,
And hurrying hither from his side I clasped
His chain of rubies round my neck awhile,
In full sight of the sun. I have no more
To say." Then up spoke Hatton's trumpeter:
"But I have more to say. Last night I saw
Doughty, but not in full sight of the sun,
Nor once, nor twice, but three times at the least,
Carrying chains of gold, clusters of gems,
And whatsoever wealth he could convey
Into his cabin and smuggle in smallest space."
"Nay," Doughty stammered, mixing sneer and lie,
Yet bolstering up his courage with the thought
That being what courtiers called a gentleman
He ranked above the rude sea-discipline,
"Nay, they were free gifts from the Spanish crew
Because I treated them with courtesy."

Then bluff Will Harvest, "That perchance were true,
For he hath been close closeted for hours
With their chief officers, drinking their health
In our own war-bought wine, while down below
Their captured English seaman groaned his last."
Then Drake, whose utter silence, with a sense
Of infinite power and justice, ruled their hearts,
Suddenly thundered—and the traitor blanched
And quailed before him. "This my flesh and blood
I placed beneath thee as my dearer self!
But thou, in trampling on him, shalt not say
I charge thy brother. Nay, thou chargest me!
Against me only hast thou stirred this strife;
And now, by God, shalt thou learn, once for all,
That I, thy captain for this voyage, hold
The supreme power of judgment in my hands.
Get thee aboard my flagship! When I come
I shall have more to say to thee; but thou,
My brother, take this galleon in thy charge;
For, as I see, she holdeth all the stores
Which Doughty failed to find. She shall return
With us to that New World from which she came.
But now let these our prisoners all embark
In yonder pinnace; let them all go free.
I care not to be cumbered on my way
Through dead Magellan's unattempted dream
With chains and prisoners. In that Golden World
Which means much more to me than I can speak,
Much more, much more than I can speak or breathe,
Being, behind whatever name it bears—
Earthly Paradise, Island of the Saints,
Cathay, or Zipangu, or Hy Brasil—
The eternal symbol of my soul's desire,
A sacred country shining on the sea,
That Vision without which, the wise king said,
A people perishes; in that place of hope,
That Tirn'an Og, that land of lasting youth,
Where whosoever sails with me shall drink

Fountains of immortality and dwell
Beyond the fear of death for evermore,
There shall we see the dust of battle dance
Everywhere in the sunbeam of God's peace!
Oh, in the new Atlantis of my soul
There are no captives: there the wind blows free;
And, as in sleep, I have heard the marching song
Of mighty peoples rising in the West,
Wonderful cities that shall set their foot
Upon the throat of all old tyrannies;
And on the West wind I have heard a cry,
The shoreless cry of the prophetic sea
Heralding through that golden wilderness
The Soul whose path our task is to make straight,
Freedom, the last great Saviour of mankind.
I know not what I know: these are wild words,
Which as the sun draws out earth's morning mists
Over dim fields where careless cattle sleep,
Some visionary Light, unknown, afar,
Draws from my darkling soul. Why should we drag
Thither this Old-World weight of utter gloom,
Or with the ballast of these heavy hearts
Make sail in sorrow for Pacific Seas?
Let us leave chains and prisoners to Spain;
But set these free to make their own way home!"
So said he, groping blindly towards the truth,
And heavy with the treason of his friend.
His face was like a king's face as he spake,
For sorrows that strike deep reveal the deep;
And through the gateways of a raggéd wound
Sometimes a god will drive his chariot wheels
From some deep heaven within the hearts of men.
Nevertheless, the immediate seamen there
Knowing how great a ransom they might ask
For some among their prisoners, men of wealth
And high degree, scarce liked to free them thus;
And only saw in Drake's conflicting moods
The moment's whim. "For little will he care,"

They muttered, "when we reach those fabled shores,
Whether his cannon break their golden peace."
Yet to his face they murmured not at all;
Because his eyes compelled them like a law.
So there they freed the prisoners and set sail
Across the earth-shaking shoulders of the broad
Atlantic, and the great grey slumbrous waves
Triumphantly swelled up to meet the keels.

BOOK III.

Now in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*
At dusk, Drake sent for Doughty. From one wall
The picture of his love looked down on him;
And on the table lay the magic chart,
Drawn on a buffalo horn, all small peaked isles,
Dwarf promontories, tiny twisted creeks,
And fairy harbours under elfin hills,
With marvellous inscriptions lined in red,—
As *Here is Gold*, or *Many Rubies Here*,
Or *Ware Witch-crafte*, or *Here is Cannibals.*
For in his great simplicity the man
Delighted in it, with the adventurous heart
Of boyhood poring o'er some well-thumbed tale
On blue Twelfth Night beside the crimson fire;
And o'er him, like a vision of a boy
In his first knighthood when, upon some hill
Washed by the silver fringes of the sea,
Amidst the purple heather he lies and reads
Of Arthur and Avilion, like a star
His love's pure face looked down. There Doughty came,
Half fearful, half defiant, with a crowd
Of jostling half-excuses on his lips,
And one dark swarm of adders in his heart.
For now what light of chivalry remained
In Doughty's mind was thickening with a plot,
Subtler and deadlier than the serpent's first
Attempt on our first sire in Eden bower.
Drake, with a countenance open as the sun,

Received him, saying: "Forgive me, friend, for I
Was hasty with thee. I wellnigh forgot
Those large and liberal nights we two have passed
In this old cabin, telling all our dreams
And hopes, in friendship, o'er and o'er again.
But Vicary, thy lawyer friend, hath been
Pleading with me; and now I understand
All; so forgive,—for thou art hasty too,
And hast said things in passion which, 'fore God,
I would not take from other men alive.
But now—I understand. Thou shalt no more
Be vexed with a divided mastership.
Indeed, I trust thee, Doughty; against all
Appearances I trust thee. Wilt thou not
Be friends with me? For now in ample proof
Thou shalt take charge of this my *Golden Hynde*
In all things, save of seamanship, which rests
With the ship's master under my command.
But I myself will sail upon the prize."
And with the word he gathered up the chart,
Took down his lady's picture with a smile,
Gripped Doughty's hand and left him, staring, sheer
Bewildered with that magnanimity
Of faith, throughout all shadows, in some light
Unseen behind the shadows. Thus did Drake
Give up his own fair cabin which he loved;
Being, it seemed, a little travelling home,
Fragrant with memories,—gave it, as he thought,
In recompense to one whom he had wronged.
For even as his mind must ever yearn
To shores beyond the sunset, even so
He yearned through all dark shadows to his friend,
And with his greater nature striving still
To comprehend the lesser, as the sky
Embraces our low earth, he would adduce
Justifications, thus: "These men of law
Are trained to plead for any and every cause,
To feign an indignation, or to prove

The worse is better and that black is white!
Small wonder that their passion goes astray:
There is one prayer, one prayer for all of us—
Enter not into judgment with Thy servant!"

Yet as his boat pulled tow'rd the Spanish prize
Leaving the *Golden Hynde*, far off he heard
A voice that chilled him, as the voice of Fate
Crying like some old Bellman through the world.

Song.

Yes; oh, yes; if any seek
Laughter flown or lost delight,
Glancing eye or rosy cheek,
Love shall claim his own to-night!
Say, hath any lost a friend?
Yes; oh, yes!
Let his distress
In my ditty find its end.

Yes; oh, yes; here all is found!
Kingly palaces await
Each its rightful owner, crowned
King and consecrate,
Under the wet and wintry ground!
Yes; oh, yes!
There sure redress
Lies where all is lost and found.

And Doughty, though Drake's deed of kindness flashed
A moment's kind contrition through his heart,
Immediately, with all his lawyer's wit
True to the cause that hired him, laughed it by,
And straight began to weave the treacherous web
Of soft intrigue wherein he meant to snare

The passions of his comrades. Night and day,
As that small fleet drove onward o'er the deep,
Cleaving the sunset with their bright black prows
Or hunted by the red pursuing Dawn,
He stirred between the high-born gentlemen
(Whose white and jewelled hands, gallant in fight,
And hearts remembering Crecy and Poictiers,
Were of scant use in common seamanship),
Between these and the men whose rough tarred arms
Were good at equal need in storm or war
Yet took a poorer portion of the prize,
He stirred a subtle jealousy and fanned
A fire that swiftly grew almost to hate.
For when the seamen must take precedence
Of loiterers on the deck—through half a word,
Small, with intense device, like some fierce lens,
He magnified their rude and blustering mode;
Or urged some scented fop, whose idle brain
Busied itself with momentary whims,
To bid the master alter here a sail,
Or there a rope; and, if the man refused,
Doughty, at night, across the wine-cups, raved
Against the rising insolence of the mob;
And hinted Drake himself was half to blame,
In words that seemed to say, "I am his friend,
Or I should bid you think him all to blame."
So fierce indeed the strife became that once,
While Chester, Doughty's catspaw, played with fire,
The grim ship-master growled between his teeth,
"Remember, sir, remember, ere too late,
Magellan's mutinous vice-admiral's end."
And Doughty heard, and with a boisterous laugh
Slapped the old sea-dog on the back and said,
"The gallows are for dogs, not gentlemen!"
Meanwhile his brother, sly John Doughty, sought
To fan the seamen's fear of the unknown world
With whispers and conjectures; and, at night,
He brought old books of Greek and Hebrew down

Into the foc'sle, claiming by their aid
A knowledge of Black Art, and power to tell
The future, which he dreadfully displayed
There in the flickering light of the oily lamp,
Bending above their huge and swarthy palms
And tracing them to many a grisly doom.

So many a night and day westward they plunged.
The half-moon ripened to its mellow round,
Dwindled again and ripened yet again.
And there was nought around them but the grey
Ruin and roar of huge Atlantic seas.
And only like a memory of the world
They left behind them rose the same great sun,
And daily rolled his chariot through their sky,
Whereof the skilled musicians made a song.

Song.

The same sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other,
Wherever we be;
With the same goal before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Ringed round with the sea.

When the breakers charged thundering
In thousands all round us
With a lightning of lances
Uphurtled on high,
When the stout ships were sundering
A rapture hath crowned us,
Like the wild light that dances
On the crests that flash by.

When the waters lay breathless
Gazing at Hesper
Guarding the golden
Fruit of the tree,
Heard we the deathless
Wonderful whisper
Wafting the olden
Dream of the sea.

No land in the ring of it
Now, all around us
Only the splendid
Resurging unknown!
How should we sing of it?—
This that hath found us
By the great sun attended
In splendour, alone.

Ah! the broad miles of it,
White with the onset
Of waves without number
Warring for glee.
Ah! the soft smiles of it
Down to the sunset,
Holy for slumber,
The peace of the sea.

The wave's heart, exalted,
Leaps forward to meet us,
The sun on the sea-wave
Lies white as the moon:
The soft sapphire-vaulted
Deep heaven smiles to greet us,
Free sons of the free-wave
All singing one tune.

The same sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other,
Wherever we be;
With the same goal before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Queen of the sea.

At last a faint-flushed April Dawn arose
With milk-white arms up-binding golden clouds
Of fragrant hair behind her lovely head;
And lo, before the bright black plunging prows
The whole sea suddenly shattered into shoals
Of rolling porpoises. Everywhere they tore
The glittering water. Like a moving crowd
Of black bright rocks washed smooth by foaming tides,
They thrilled the unconscious fancy of the crews
With subtle, wild, and living hints of land.
And soon Columbus' happy signals came,
The signs that saved him when his mutineers
Despaired at last and clamoured to return,—
And there, with awe triumphant in their eyes,
They saw, lazily tossing on the tide,
A drift of seaweed and a berried branch,
Which silenced them as if they had seen a Hand
Writing with fiery letters on the deep.
Then a black cormorant, vulture of the sea,
With neck outstretched and one long ominous *honk*,
Went hurtling past them to its unknown bourne.
A mighty white-winged albatross came next;
Then flight on flight of clamorous clanging gulls;
And last, a wild and sudden shout of "Land!"
Echoed from crew to crew across the waves.
Then, dumb upon the rigging as they hung
Staring at it, a menace chilled their blood.
For like *Il Gran Nemico* of Dante, dark,
Ay, coloured like a thunder-cloud, from North

To South, in front, there slowly rose to sight
A country like a dragon fast asleep
Along the West, with wrinkled, purple wings
Ending in ragged forests o'er its spine;
And with great craggy claws out-thrust, that turned
(As the dim distances dissolved their veils)
To promontories bounding a huge bay.
There o'er the hushed and ever shallower tide
The staring ships drew nigh and thought, "Is this
The Dragon of our Golden Apple Tree,
The guardian of the fruit of our desire
Which grows in gardens of the Hesperides
Where those three sisters weave a white-armed dance
Around it everlastingly, and sing
Strange songs in a strange tongue that still convey
Warning to heedful souls?" Nearer they drew,
And now, indeed, from out a soft blue-grey
Mingling of colours on that coast's deep flank
There crept a garden of enchantment, height
O'er height, a garden sloping from the hills,
Wooded as with Aladdin's trees that bore
All-coloured clustering gems instead of fruit;
Now vaster as it grew upon their eyes,
And like some Roman amphitheatre
Cirque above mighty cirque all round the bay,
With jewels and flowers ablaze on women's breasts
Innumerably confounded and confused;
While lovely faces flushed with lust of blood,
Rank above rank upon their tawny thrones
In soft barbaric splendour lapped, and lulled
By the low thunderings of a thousand lions,
Luxuriously smiled as they bent down
Over the scarlet-splashed and steaming sands
To watch the white-limbed gladiators die.

Such fears and dreams for Francis Drake, at least,
Rose and dissolved in his nigh fevered brain
As they drew near that equatorial shore;

For rumours had been borne to him; and now
He knew not whether to impute the wrong
To his untrustful mind or to believe
Doughty a traitorous liar; for the sense
Of his own friendship towards him made it hard
To understand that treachery; yet there seemed
Proof and to spare. A thousand shadows rose
To mock him with their veiled indicative hands.
And each alone he laid and exorcised
With ease; but ah, not all, not all at once.
And for each doubt he banished, one returned
From darker depths to mock him o'er again.

So, in that bay, the little fleet sank sail
And anchored; and the wild reality
Behind those dreams towered round them on the hills,
Or so it seemed. And Drake bade lower a boat,
And went ashore with sixteen men to seek
Water; and, as they neared the embowered beach,
Over the green translucent tide there came,
A hundred yards from land, a drowsy sound
Immeasurably repeated and prolonged,
As of innumerable elfin drums
Dreamily mustering in the tropic bloom.
This from without they heard, across the waves;
But when they glided into a flowery creek
Under the sharp black shadows of the trees—
Jaca and Mango and Palm and red festoons
Of garlanded Liana wreaths—it ebbed
Into the murmur of the mighty fronds,
Prodigious leaves whose veinings bore the fresh
Impression of the finger-prints of God.
There humming-birds, like flake of purple fire
Upon some passing seraph's plumage, beat
And quivered in blinding blots of golden light
Between the embattled cactus and cardoon;
While one huge whisper of primeval awe

Seemed to await the cool green eventide
When God should walk His Garden as of old.

Now as the boats were plying to and fro
Between the ships and that enchanted shore,
Drake bade his comrades tarry a little and went
Apart, alone, into the trackless woods.
Tormented with his thoughts, he saw all round
Once more the battling image of his mind,
Where there was nought of man, only the vast
Unending silent struggle of Titan trees,
Large internecine twistings of the world,
The hushed death-grapple and the still intense
Locked anguish of Laocoons that gripped
Death by the throat for thrice three hundred years.
Once, like a subtle mockery overhead,
Some black-armed chattering ape swung swiftly by,
But he strode onward, thinking—"Was it false,
False all that kind outreaching of the hands?
False? Was there nothing certain, nothing sure
In those divinest aisles and towers of Time
Wherein we took sweet counsel? Is there nought
Sure but the solid dust beneath our feet?
Must all those lovelier fabrics of the soul,
Being so divinely bright and delicate,
Waver and shine no longer than some poor
Prismatic aery bubble? Ay, they burst,
And all their glory shrinks into one tear
No bitterer than some idle love-lorn maid
Sheds for her dead canary. God, it hurts,
This, this hurts most, to think how we must miss
What might have been, for nothing but a breath,
A babbling of the tongue, an argument,
Or such a poor contention as involves
The thrones and dominations of this earth,—
How many of us, like seed on barren ground,
Must miss the flower and harvest of their prayers,

The living light of friendship and the grasp
Which for its very meaning once implied
Eternities of utterance and the life
Immortal of two souls beyond the grave?"

Now, wandering upward ever, he reached and clomb
The slope side of a fern-fringed precipice,
And, at the summit, found an open glade,
Whence, looking o'er the forest, he beheld
The sea; and, in the land-locked bay below,
Far, far below, his elfin-tiny ships,
All six at anchor on the crawling tide!
Then onward, upward, through the woods once more
He plunged with bursting heart and burning brow;
And, once again, like madness, the black shapes
Of doubt swung through his brain and chattered and laughed,
Till he upstretched his arms in agony
And cursed the name of Doughty, cursed the day
They met, cursed his false face and courtier smiles,
"For oh," he cried, "how easy a thing it were
For truth to wear the garb of truth! This proves
His treachery!" And there, at once, his thoughts
Tore him another way, as thus, "And yet
If he were false, is he not subtle enough
To hide it? Why, this proves his innocence—
This very courtly carelessness which I,
Black-hearted evil-thinker as I am,
In my own clumsier spirit so misjudge!
These children of the court are butterflies
Fluttering hither and thither, and I—poor fool—
Would fix them to a stem and call them flowers,
Nay, bid them grasp the ground like towering oaks
And shadow all the zenith;" and yet again
The madness of distrustful friendship gleamed
From his fierce eyes, "Oh villain, damnèd villain,
God's murrain on his heart! I know full well
He hides what he can hide! He wears no fault

Upon the gloss and frippery of his breast!
It is not that! It is the hidden things,
Unseizable, the things I do not know,
Ay, it is these, these, these and these alone
That I mistrust."
And, as he walked, the skies
Grew full of threats, and now enormous clouds
Rose mammoth-like above the ensanguined deep,
Trampling the daylight out; and, with its death
Dyed purple, rushed along as if they meant
To obliterate the world. He took no heed.
Though that strange blackness brimmed the branching aisles
With horror, he strode on till in the gloom,
Just as his winding way came out once more
Over a precipice that o'erlooked the bay,
There, as he went, not gazing down, but up,
He saw what seemed a ponderous granite cliff,
A huge ribbed shell upon a lonely shore
Left by forgotten mountains when they sank
Back to earth's breast like billows on a sea.
A tall and whispering crowd of tree-ferns waved
Mysterious fringes round it. In their midst
He flung himself at its broad base, with one
Sharp shivering cry of pain, "Show me Thy ways,
O God, teach me Thy paths! I am in the dark!
Lighten my darkness!"
Almost as he spoke
There swept across the forest, far and wide,
Gathering power and volume as it came,
A sound as of a rushing mighty wind;
And, overhead, like great black gouts of blood
Wrung from the awful forehead of the Night
The first drops fell and ceased. Then, suddenly,
Out of the darkness, earth with all her seas,
Her little ships at anchor in the bay
(Five ebony ships upon a sheet of silver,
Drake saw not that, indeed, Drake saw not that!),
Her woods, her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest twigs.

Leapt like a hunted stag through one immense
Lightning of revelation into the murk
Of Erebus: then heaven o'er rending heaven
Shattered and crashed down ruin over the world.
But, in that deeper darkness, Francis Drake
Stood upright now, and with blind outstretched arms
Groped at that strange forgotten cliff and shell
Of mystery; for in that flash of light
Æons had passed; and now the Thing in front
Made his blood freeze with memories that lay
Behind his Memory. In the gloom he groped,
And with dark hands that knew not what they knew,
As one that shelters in the night, unknowing,
Beneath a stranded shipwreck, with a cry
He touched the enormous rain-washed belted ribs
And bones like battlements of some Mastodon
Embedded there until the trump of doom.

After long years, long centuries, perchance,
Triumphantly some other pioneer
Would stand where Drake now stood and read the tale
Of ages where he only felt the cold
Touch in the dark of some huge mystery;
Yet Drake might still be nearer to the light
Who now was whispering from his great deep heart,
"Show me Thy ways, O God, teach me Thy paths!"
And there by some strange instinct, oh, he felt
God's answer there, as if he grasped a hand
Across a gulf of twice ten thousand years;
And he regained his lost magnificence
Of faith in that great Harmony which resolves
Our discords, faith through all the ruthless laws
Of nature in their lovely pitilessness,
Faith in that Love which outwardly must wear,
Through all the sorrows of eternal change,
The splendour of the indifference of God.

All round him through the heavy purple gloom

Sloped the soft rush of silver-arrowed rain,
Loosening the skies' hard anguish as with tears.
Once more he felt his unity with all
The vast composure of the universe,
And drank deep at the fountains of that peace
Which comprehends the tumult of our days.
But with that peace the power to act returned;
And, with his back against the Mastodon,
He stared through the great darkness tow'rds the sea.
The rain ceased for a moment: only the slow
Drip of the dim droop-feathered palms all round
Deepened the hush.
Then, out of the gloom once more
The whole earth leapt to sight with all her woods,
Her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest twigs distinct
For one wild moment; but Drake only saw
The white flash of her seas and there, oh there
That land-locked bay with those five elfin ships,
Five elfin ebony ships upon a sheet
Of wrinkled silver! Then, as the thunder followed,
One thought burst through his brain—
Where was the sixth?
Over the grim precipitous edge he hung,
An eagle waiting for the lightning now
To swoop upon his prey. One iron hand
Gripped a rough tree-root like a bunch of snakes;
And, as the rain rushed round him, far away
He saw to northward yet another flash,
A scribble of God's finger in the sky
Over a waste of white stampeding waves.
His eye flashed like a falchion as he saw it,
And from his lips there burst the sea-king's laugh;
For there, with a fierce joy he knew, he knew
Doughty, at last—an open mutineer!
An open foe to fight! Ay, there she went,—
His *Golden Hynde*, his little *Golden Hynde*
A wild deserter scudding to the North.
And, almost ere the lightning, Drake had gone

Crashing down the face of the precipice,
By a narrow water-gully, and through the huge
Forest he tore the straight and perilous way
Down to the shore; while, three miles to the North,
Upon the wet poop of the *Golden Hynde*
Doughty stood smiling. Scarce would he have smiled
Knowing that Drake had seen him from that tower
Amidst the thunders; but, indeed, he thought
He had escaped unseen amidst the storm.
Many a day he had worked upon the crew,
Fanning their fears and doubts until he won
The more part to his side. And when they reached
That coast, he showed them how Drake meant to sail
Southward, into the unknown Void; but he
Would have them suddenly slip by stealth away
Northward to Darien, showing them what a life
Of golden glory waited for them there,
If, laying aside this empty quest, they joined
The merry feasters round those island fires
Which over many a dark-blue creek illumed
Buccaneer camps in scarlet logwood groves,
Fringing the Gulf of Mexico, till dawn
Summoned the Black Flags out to sweep the sea.

But when Drake reached the flower-embowered boat
And found the men awaiting his return
There, in a sheltering grove of bread-fruit trees
Beneath great eaves of leafage that obscured
Their sight, but kept the storm out, as they tossed
Pieces of eight or rattled the bone dice,
His voice went through them like a thunderbolt,
For none of them had seen the *Golden Hynde*
Steal from the bay; and now the billows burst
Like cannon down the coast; and they had thought
Their boat could not be launched until the storm
Abated. Under Drake's compelling eyes,
Nevertheless, they poled her down the creek
Without one word, waiting their chance. Then all

Together with their brandished oars they thrust,
And on the fierce white out-draught of a wave
They shot up, up and over the toppling crest
Of the next, and plunged crashing into the vale
Behind it: then they settled at their thwarts,
And the fierce water boiled before their blades
As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,
They soared and crashed across the rolling seas.

Not for the Spanish prize did Drake now steer,
But for that little ship the *Marygold*,
Swiftest of sail, next to the *Golden Hynde*,
And, in the hands of Francis Drake, indeed
Swiftest of all; and ere the seamen knew
What power, as of a wind, bore them along,
Anchor was up, their hands were on the sheets,
The sails were broken out, the *Marygold*
Was flying like a storm-cloud to the North,
And on her poop an iron statue still
As death stood Francis Drake.
One hour they rushed
Northward, with green seas washing o'er the deck
And buffeted with splendour; then they saw
The *Golden Hynde* like some wing-broken gull
With torn mismanaged plumes beating the air
In peril of utter shipwreck; saw her fly
Half-mast, a feeble signal of distress
Despite all Doughty's curses; for her crew
With wild divisions torn amongst themselves
Most gladly now surrendered in their hearts,
As close alongside grandly onward swept
The *Marygold*, with canvas trim and taut
Magnificently drawing the full wind,
Her gunners waiting at their loaded guns
Bare-armed and silent; and that iron soul
Alone, upon her silent quarter-deck.
There they hauled up into the wind and lay
Rocking, while Drake, alone, without a guard,

Boarding the runaway, dismissed his boat
Back to the *Marygold*. Then his voice out-rang
Trumpet-like o'er the trembling mutineers,
And clearly, as if they were but busied still
About the day's routine. They hid their shame,
As men that would propitiate a god,
By flying to fulfil his lightest word;
And ere they knew what power, as of a wind
Impelled them—that half wreck was trim and taut,
Her sails all drawing and her bows afoam;
And, creeping past the *Marygold* once more,
She led their Southward way! And not till then
Did Drake vouchsafe one word to the white face
Of Doughty, as he furtively slunk nigh
With some new lie upon his fear-parched lips
Thirsting for utterance in his crackling laugh
Of deprecation; and with one ruffling puff
Of pigeon courage in his blinded soul—
"I am no sea-dog—even Francis Drake
Would scarce misuse a gentleman. Thank God
I am a gentleman!" And there Drake turned
And summoned four swart seamen out by name.
His words went like a cold wind through their flesh
As with a passionless voice he slowly said,
"Take ye this fellow: bind him to the mast
Until what time I shall decide his fate."
And Doughty gasped as at the world's blank end,—
"Nay, Francis," cried he, "wilt thou thus misuse
A gentleman?" But as the seamen gripped
His arms he struggled vainly and furiously
To throw them off; and in his impotence
Let slip the whole of his treacherous cause and hope
In empty wrath,—"Fore God," he foamed and snarled
"Ye shall all smart for this when we return!
Unhand me, dogs! I have Lord Burleigh's power
Behind me. There is nothing I have done
Without his warrant! Ye shall smart for this!
Unhand me, I say, unhand me!"

And in one flash
Drake saw the truth, and Doughty saw his eyes
Lighten upon him; and his false heart quailed
Once more; and he suddenly suffered himself
Quietly, strangely, to be led away
And bound without a murmur to the mast.
And strangely Drake remembered, as those words,
"Ye shall all smart for this when we return,"
Yelped at his faith, how while the Dover cliffs
Faded from sight he leaned to his new friend
Doughty and said: "I blame them not who stay!
I blame them not at all who cling to home,
For many of us, indeed, shall not return,
Nor ever know that sweetness any more."

And when they had reached their anchorage anew,
Drake, having now resolved to bring his fleet
Beneath a more compact control, at once
Took all the men and the chief guns and stores
From out the Spanish prize; and sent Tom Moone
To set the hulk afire. Also he bade
Unbind the traitor and ordered him aboard
The pinnace *Christopher*. John Doughty, too,
He ordered thither, into the grim charge
Of old Tom Moone, thinking it best to keep
The poisonous leaven carefully apart
Until they had won well Southward, to a place
Where, finally committed to their quest,
They might arraign the traitor without fear
Or favour, and acquit him or condemn.
But those two brothers, doubting as the false
Are damned to doubt, saw murder in his eyes,
And thought "He means to sink the smack one night."
And they refused to go, till Drake abruptly
Ordered them straightway to be slung on board
With ropes.
The daylight waned; but ere the sun
Sank, the five ships were plunging to the South;

For Drake would halt no longer, lest the crews
Also should halt betwixt two purposes.
He took the tide of fortune at the flood;
And onward through the now subsiding storm,
Ere they could think what power as of a wind
Impelled them, he had swept them on their way.
Far, far into the night they saw the blaze
That leapt in crimson o'er the abandoned hulk
Behind them, like a mighty hecatomb
Marking the path of some Titanic will.
Many a night and day they Southward drove.
Sometimes at midnight round them all the sea
Quivered with witches' oils and water snakes,
Green, blue, and red, with lambent tongues of fire.
Mile upon mile about the blurred black hulls
A cauldron of tempestuous colour coiled.
On every mast mysterious meteors burned,
And from the shores a bellowing rose and fell
As of great bestial gods that walked all night
Through some wild hell unknown, too vast for men;
But when the silver and crimson of the dawn
Broke out, they saw the tropic shores anew,
The fair white foam, and, round about the rocks,
Weird troops of tusked sea-lions; and the world
Mixed with their dreams and made them stranger still.
And, once, so fierce a tempest scattered the fleet
That even the hardiest souls began to think
There was a Jonah with them; for the seas
Rose round them like green mountains, peaked and ridged
With heights of Alpine snow amongst the clouds;
And many a league to Southward, when the ships
Gathered again amidst the sinking waves
Four only met. The ship of Thomas Drake
Was missing; and some thought it had gone down
With all hands in the storm. But Francis Drake
Held on his way, learning from hour to hour
To merge himself in immortality;
Learning the secrets of those pitiless laws

Which dwarf all mortal grief, all human pain,
To something less than nothing by the side
Of that eternal travail dimly guessed,
Since first he felt in the miraculous dark
The great bones of the Mastodon, that hulk
Of immemorial death. He learned to judge
The passing pageant of this outward world
As by the touch-stone of that memory;
Even as in that country which some said
Lay now not far, the great Tezcucan king,
Resting his jewelled hand upon a skull,
And on a smouldering glory of jewels throned
There in his temple of the Unknown God
Over the host of Aztec princes, clad
In golden hauberks gleaming under soft
Surcoats of green or scarlet feather-work,
Could in the presence of a mightier power
Than life or death give up his guilty sons,
His only sons, to the sacrificial sword.
And hour by hour the soul of Francis Drake,
Unconscious as an oak-tree of its growth,
Increased in strength and stature as he drew
Earth, heaven, and hell within him, more and more.
For as the dream we call our world, with all
Its hues is but a picture in the brain,
So did his soul enfold the universe
With gradual sense of superhuman power,
While every visible shape within the vast
Horizon seemed the symbol of some thought
Waiting for utterance. He had found indeed
God's own Nirvana, not of empty dream
But of intensest life! Nor did he think
Aught of all this; but, as the rustic deems
The colours that he carries in his brain
Are somehow all outside him while he peers
Unaltered through two windows in his face,
Drake only knew that as the four ships plunged
Southward, the world mysteriously grew

More like a prophet's vision, hour by hour,
Fraught with dark omens and significances,
A world of hieroglyphs and sacred signs
Wherein he seemed to read the truth that lay
Hid from the Roman augurs when of old
They told the future from the flight of birds.
How vivid with disaster seemed the flight
Of those blood-red flamingoes o'er the dim
Blue steaming forest, like two terrible thoughts
Flashing, unapprehended, through his brain!

And now, as they drove Southward, day and night,
Through storm and calm, the shores that fleeted by
Grew wilder, grander, with his growing soul,
And pregnant with the approaching mystery.
And now along the Patagonian coast
They cruised, and in the solemn midnight saw
Wildernesses of shaggy barren marl,
Petrified seas of lava, league on league,
Craters and bouldered slopes and granite cliffs
With ragged rents, grim gorges, deep ravines,
And precipice on precipice up-piled
Innumerable to those dim distances
Where, over valleys hanging in the clouds,
Gigantic mountains and volcanic peaks
Catching the wefts of cirrhus fleece appeared
To smoke against the sky, though all was now
Dead as that frozen chaos of the moon,
Or some huge passion of a slaughtered soul
Prostrate under the marching of the stars.

At last, and in a silver dawn, they came
Suddenly on a broad-winged estuary,
And, in the midst of it, an island lay.
There they found shelter, on its leeward side,
And Drake convened upon the *Golden Hynde*
His dread court-martial. Two long hours he heard
Defence and accusation, then broke up

The conclave, and, with burning heart and brain,
Feverishly seeking everywhere some sign
To guide him, went ashore upon that isle,
And lo, turning a rugged point of rock,
He rubbed his eyes to find out if he dreamed,
For there—a Crusoe's wonder, a miracle,
A sign—before him stood on that lone strand
Stark, with a stern arm pointing out his way
And jangling still one withered skeleton,
The grim black gallows where Magellan hanged
His mutineers. Its base was white with bones
Picked by the gulls, and crumbling o'er the sand
A dread sea-salt, dry from the tides of time.
There, on that lonely shore, Death's finger-post
Stood like some old forgotten truth made strange
By the long lapse of many memories,
All starting up in resurrection now
As at the trump of doom, heroic ghosts
Out of the cells and graves of his deep brain
Reproaching him. "*Were this man not thy friend,*
Ere now he should have died the traitor's death.
What wilt thou say to the others if they, too,
Prove false? Or wilt thou slay the lesser and save
The greater sinner? Nay, if thy right hand
Offend thee, cut it off!" And, in one flash,
Drake saw his path and chose it.

With a voice
Low as the passionless anguished voice of Fate
That comprehends all pain, but girds it round
With iron, lest some random cry break out
For man's misguidance, he drew all his men
Around him, saying, "Ye all know how I loved
Doughty, who hath betrayed me twice and thrice,
For I still trusted him: he was no felon
That I should turn my heart away from him!
He is the type and image of man's laws;
While I—am lawless as the soul that still
Must sail and seek a world beyond the worlds,

A law behind earth's laws. I dare not judge!
But ye—who know the mighty goal we seek,
Who have seen him sap our courage, hour by hour,
Till God Himself almost appeared a dream
Behind his technicalities and doubts
Of aught he could not touch or handle; ye
Who have seen him stir up jealousy and strife
Between our seamen and our gentlemen,
Even as the world stirs up continual strife,
Bidding the man forget he is a man
With God's own patent of nobility;
Ye who have seen him strike this last sharp blow—
Sharper than any enemy hath struck,—
Ay, Jonathan, mine own familiar friend,
He whom I trusted, he alone could strike—
So sharply, for indeed I loved this man.
Judge ye—for see, I cannot. Do not doubt
I loved this man!
But now, if ye will let him have his life,
Oh, speak! But, if ye think it must be death,
Hold up your hands in silence!" His voice dropped,
And eagerly he whispered forth one word
Beyond the scope of Fate—"Yet, oh, my friends,
I would not have him die!" There was no sound
Save the long thunder of eternal seas,—
Drake bowed his head and prayed.

Then, suddenly,
One man upheld his hand; and, all at once,
A brawny forest of brown arms arose
In silence, and the great sea whispered *Death.*

. . . . . .

There, with one big swift impulse, Francis Drake
Held out his right sun-blackened hand and gripped
The hand that Doughty proffered him; and lo,
Doughty laughed out and said, "Since I must die,
Let us have one more hour of comradeship,
One hour as old companions. Let us make
A feast here, on this island, ere I go

Where there is no more feasting." So they made
A great and solemn banquet as the day
Decreased; and Doughty bade them all unlock
Their sea-chest and bring out their rich array.
There, by that wondering ocean of the West,
In crimson doublets, lined and slashed with gold,
In broidered lace and double golden chains
Embossed with rubies and great cloudy pearls
They feasted, gentlemen adventurers,
Drinking old malmsey, as the sun sank down.

Now Doughty fronting the rich death of day
And flourishing a silver pouncet-box
With many a courtly jest and rare conceit,
There as he sat in rich attire, out-braved
The rest. Though darker-hued, yet richer far,
His murrey-coloured doublet double-piled
Of Genoa velvet, puffed with ciprus, shone;
For over its grave hues the gems that bossed
His golden collar, wondrously relieved,
Blazed lustrous to the West like stars. But Drake
Wore simple black, with midnight silver slashed,
And, at his side, a great two-handed sword.
At last they rose, just as the sun's last rays
Rested upon the heaving molten gold
Immeasurable. The long slow sigh of the waves
That creamed across the lonely time-worn reef
All round the island seemed the very voice
Of the Everlasting: black against the sea
The gallows of Magellan stretched its arm
With that gaunt skeleton and its rusty chain
Creaking and swinging in the solemn breath
Of eventide like some strange pendulum
Measuring out the moments that remained.
There did they take the holy sacrament
Of Jesus' body and blood. Then Doughty and Drake
Kissed each other, as brothers, on the cheek;
And Doughty knelt. And Drake, without one word,

Leaning upon the two-edged naked sword
Stood at his side, with iron lips, and eyes
Full of the sunset; while the doomed man bowed
His head upon a rock. The great sun dropped
Suddenly, and the land and sea were dark;
And as it were a sign, Drake lifted up
The gleaming sword. It seemed to sweep the heavens
Down in its arc as he smote, once, and no more.

Then, for a moment, silence froze their veins,
Till one fierce seaman stooped with a hoarse cry;
And, like an eagle clutching up its prey,
His arm swooped down and bore the head aloft,
Gorily streaming, by the long dark hair;
And a great shout went up, "So perish all
Traitors to God and England." Then Drake turned
And bade them to their ships; and, wondering,
They left him. As the boats thrust out from shore
Brave old Tom Moone looked back with faithful eyes
Like a great mastiff to his master's face.
He, looming larger from his loftier ground
Clad with the slowly gathering night of stars
And gazing sea-ward o'er his quiet dead,
Seemed like some Titan bronze in grandeur based
Unshakeable until the crash of doom
Shattered the black foundations of the world.

BOOK IV.

Dawn, everlasting and almighty Dawn,
Hailed by ten thousand names of death and birth,
Who, chiefly by thy name of Sorrow, seem'st
To half the world a sunset, God's great Dawn,
Fair light of all earth's partings till we meet
Where Dawn and sunset, mingling East and West,
Shall make in some deep Orient of the soul
One radiant Rose of Love for evermore;
Teach me, oh teach to bear thy broadening light,
Thy deepening wonder, lest as old dreams fade
With love's unfaith, like wasted hours of youth
And dim illusions vanish in thy beam,
Their rapture and their anguish break that heart
Which loved them, and must love for ever now.
Let thy great sphere of splendour, ring by ring
For ever widening, draw new seas, new skies,
Within my ken; yet, as I still must bear
This love, help me to grow in spirit with thee.
Dawn on my song which trembles like a cloud
Pierced with thy beauty. Rise, shine, as of old
Across the wandering ocean in the sight
Of those world-wandering mariners, when earth
Rolled flat up to the Gates of Paradise,
And each slow mist that curled its gold away
From each new sea they furrowed into pearl
Might bring before their blinded mortal eyes
God and the Glory. Lighten as on the soul
Of him that all night long in torment dire,

Anguish and thirst unceasing for thy ray
Upon that lonely Patagonian shore
Had lain as on the bitterest coasts of Hell.
For all night long, mocked by the dreadful peace
Of world-wide seas that darkly heaved and sank
With cold recurrence, like the slow sad breath
Of a fallen Titan dying all alone
In lands beyond all human loneliness,
While far and wide glimmers that broken targe
Hurled from tremendous battle with the gods,
And, as he breathes in pain, the chain-mail rings
Round his broad breast a muffled rattling make
For many a league, so seemed the sound of waves
Upon those beaches—there, be-mocked all night,
Beneath Magellan's gallows, Drake had watched
Beside his dead; and over him the stars
Paled as the silver chariot of the moon
Drove, and her white steeds ramped in a fury of foam
On splendid peaks of cloud. The *Golden Hynde*
Slept with those other shadows on the bay.
Between him and his home the Atlantic heaved;
And, on the darker side, across the strait
Of starry sheen that softly rippled and flowed
Betwixt the mainland and his isle, it seemed
Death's Gates indeed burst open. The night yawned
Like a foul wound. Black shapes of the outer dark
Poured out of forests older than the world;
And, just as reptiles that take form and hue,
Speckle and blotch, in strange assimilation
From thorn and scrub and stone and the waste earth
Through which they crawl, so that almost they seem
The incarnate spirits of their wilderness,
Were these most horrible kindred of the night.
Æonian glooms unfathomable, grim aisles,
Grotesque, distorted boughs and dancing shades
Out-belched their dusky brood on the dim shore;
Monsters with sooty limbs, red-raddled eyes,
And faces painted yellow, women and men;

Fierce naked giants howling to the moon,
And loathlier Gorgons with long snaky tresses
Pouring vile purple over pendulous breasts
Like wine-bags. On the mainland beach they lit
A brushwood fire that reddened creek and cove
And lapped their swarthy limbs with hideous tongues
Of flame; so near that by their light Drake saw
The blood upon the dead man's long black hair
Clotting corruption. The fierce funeral pyre
Of all things fair seemed rolling on that shore;
And in that dull red battle of smoke and flame,
While the sea crunched the pebbles, and dark drums
Rumbled out of the gloom as if this earth
Had some Titanic tigress for a soul
Purring in forests of Eternity
Over her own grim dreams, his lonely spirit
Passed through the circles of a world-wide waste
Darker than ever Dante roamed. No gulf
Was this of fierce harmonious reward,
Where Evil moans in anguish after death,
Where all men reap as they have sown, where gluttons
Gorge upon toads and usurers gulp hot streams
Of molten gold. This was that Malebolge
Which hath no harmony to mortal ears,
But seems the reeling and tremendous dream
Of some omnipotent madman. There he saw
The naked giants dragging to the flames
Young captives hideous with a new despair:
He saw great craggy blood-stained stones upheaved
To slaughter, saw through mists of blood and fire
The cannibal feast prepared, saw filthy hands
Rend limb from limb, and almost dreamed he saw
Foul mouths a-drip with quivering human flesh
And horrible laughter in the crimson storm
That clomb and leapt and stabbed at the high heaven
Till the whole night seemed saturate with red.

And all night long upon the *Golden Hynde*,

A cloud upon the waters, brave Tom Moone
Watched o'er the bulwarks for some dusky plunge
To warn him if that savage crew should mark
His captain and swim over to his isle.
Whistle in hand he watched, his boat well ready,
His men low-crouched around him, swarthy faces
Grim-chinned upon the taffrail, muttering oaths
That trampled down the fear i' their bristly throats,
While at their sides a dreadful hint of steel
Sent stray gleams to the stars. But little heed
Had Drake of all that menaced him, though oft
Some wandering giant, belching from the feast,
All blood-besmeared, would come so near he heard
His heavy breathing o'er the narrow strait.
Yet little care had Drake, for though he sat
Bowed in the body above his quiet dead,
His burning spirit wandered through the wastes,
Wandered through hells behind the apparent hell,
Horrors immeasurable, clutching at dreams
Found fair of old, but now most foul. The world
Leered at him through its old remembered mask
Of beauty: the green grass that clothed the fields
Of England (shallow, shallow fairy dream!)
What was it but the hair of dead men's graves,
Rooted in death, enriched with all decay?
And like a leprosy the hawthorn bloom
Crawled o'er the whitening bosom of the spring;
And bird and beast and insect, ay and man,
How fat they fed on one another's blood!
And Love, what faith in Love, when spirit and flesh
Are found of such a filthy composition?
And Knowledge, God, his mind went reeling back
To that dark voyage on the deadly coast
Of Panama, where one by one his men
Sickened and died of some unknown disease,
Till Joseph, his own brother, in his arms
Died; and Drake trampled down all tender thought,
All human grief, and sought to find the cause,

For his crew's sake, the ravenous unknown cause
Of that fell scourge. There, in his own dark cabin,
Lit by the wild light of the swinging lanthorn,
He laid the naked body on that board
Where they had supped together. He took the knife
From the ague-stricken surgeon's palsied hands,
And while the ship rocked in the eternal seas
And dark waves lapped against the rolling hulk
Making the silence terrible with voices,
He opened his own brother's cold white corse,
That pale deserted mansion of a soul,
Bidding the surgeon mark, with his own eyes,
While yet he had strength to use them, the foul spots,
The swollen liver, the strange sodden heart,
The yellow intestines. Yea, his dry lips hissed
There in the stark face of Eternity
"Seëst thou? Seëst thou? Knowest thou what it means?"
Then, like a dream up-surged the belfried night
Of Saint Bartholomew, the scented palaces
Whence harlots leered out on the twisted streets
Of Paris, choked with slaughter! Europe flamed
With human torches, living altar candles,
Lighted before the Cross where men had hanged
The Christ of little children. Cirque by cirque
The world-wide hell reeled round him, East and West,
To where the tortured Indians worked the will
Of lordly Spain in golden-famed Peru.
"God, is thy world a madman's dream?" he groaned:
And suddenly, the clamour on the shore
Sank and that savage horde melted away
Into the midnight forest as it came,
Leaving no sign, save where the brushwood fire
Still smouldered like a ruby in the gloom;
And into the inmost caverns of his mind
That other clamour sank, and there was peace.
"A madman's dream," he whispered, "Ay, to me
A madman's dream," but better, better far

Than that which bears upon its awful gates,
Gates of a hell defined, unalterable,
Abandon hope all ye who enter here!
Here, here at least the dawn hath power to bring
New light, new hope, new battles. Men may fight
And sweep away that evil, if no more,
At least from the small circle of their swords;
Then die, content if they have struck one stroke
For freedom, knowledge, brotherhood; one stroke
To hasten that great kingdom God proclaims
Each morning through the trumpets of the Dawn.

And far away, in Italy, that night
Young Galileo, gazing upward, heard
The self-same whisper from the abyss of stars
Which lured the soul of Shakespeare as he lay
Dreaming in may-sweet England, even now,
And with its infinite music called once more
The soul of Drake out to the unknown West.

Now like a wild rose in the fields of heaven
Slipt forth the slender fingers of the Dawn,
And drew the great grey Eastern curtains back
From the ivory saffroned couch. Rosily slid
One shining foot and one warm rounded knee
From silken coverlets of the tossed-back clouds.
Then, like the meeting after desolate years,
Face to remembered face, Drake saw the Dawn
Step forth in naked splendour o'er the sea;
Dawn, bearing still her rich divine increase
Of beauty, love, and wisdom round the world;
The same, yet not the same. So strangely gleamed
Her pearl and rose across the sapphire waves
That scarce he knew the dead man at his feet.
His world was made anew. Strangely his voice
Rang through that solemn Eden of the morn
Calling his men, and stranger than a dream
Their boats black-blurred against the crimson East,

Or flashing misty sheen where'er the light
Smote on their smooth wet sides, like seraph ships
Moved in a dewy glory towards the land;
Their oars of glittering diamond broke the sea
As by enchantment into burning jewels
And scattered rainbows from their flaming blades.
The clear green water lapping round their prows,
The words of sharp command as now the keels
Crunched on his lonely shore, and the following wave
Leapt slapping o'er the sterns, in that new light
Were more than any miracle. At last
Drake, as they grouped a little way below
The crumbling sandy cliff whereon he stood,
Seeming to overshadow them as he loomed
A cloud of black against the crimson sky,
Spoke, as a man may hardly speak but once:
"My seamen, oh my friends, companions, kings;
For I am least among you, being your captain;
And ye are men, and all men born are kings,
By right divine, and I the least of these
Because I must usurp the throne of God
And sit in judgment, even till I have set
My seal upon the red wax of this blood,
This blood of my dead friend, ere it grow cold.
Not all the waters of that mighty sea
Could wash my hands of sin if I should now
Falter upon my path. But look to it, you,
Whose word was doom last night to this dead man;
Look to it, I say, look to it! Brave men might shrink
From this great voyage; but the heart of him
Who dares turn backward now must be so hardy
That God might make a thousand millstones of it
To hang about the necks of those that hurt
Some little child, and cast them in the sea.
Yet if ye will be found so more than bold,
Speak now, and I will hear you; God will judge.
But ye shall take four ships of these my five,
Tear out the lions from their painted shields,

And speed you homeward. Leave me but one ship,
My *Golden Hynde*, and five good friends, nay one,
To watch when I must sleep, and I will prove
This judgment just against the winds of the world.
Now ye that will return, speak, let me know you,
Or be for ever silent; for I swear
Over this butchered body, if any swerve
Hereafter from the straight and perilous way,
He shall not die alone. What? Will none speak?
My comrades and my friends! Yet ye must learn,
Mark me, my friends, I'd have you all to know
That ye are kings. I'll have no jealousies
Aboard my fleet. I'll have the gentleman
To pull and haul wi' the seaman. I'll not have
That canker of the Spaniards in my fleet.
Ye that were captains, I cashier you all.
I'll have no captains; I'll have nought but seamen,
Obedient to my will, because I serve
England. What, will ye murmur? Now, beware,
Lest I should bid you homeward all alone,
You whose white hands are found too delicate
For aught but dallying with your jewelled swords!
And thou, too, master Fletcher, my ship's chaplain,
Mark me, I'll have no priest-craft. I have heard
Overmuch talk of judgment from thy lips,
God's judgment here, God's judgment there, upon us!
Whene'er the winds are contrary, thou takest
Their powers upon thee for thy moment's end.
Thou art God's minister, not God's oracle:
Chain up thy tongue a little, or, by His wounds,
If thou canst read this wide world like a book,
Thou hast so little to fear, I'll set thee adrift
On God's great sea to find thine own way home.
Why, 'tis these very tyrannies o' the soul
We strike at when we strike at Spain for England;
And shall we here, in this great wilderness,
Ungrappled and unchallenged, out of sight,
Alone, without one struggle, sink that flag

Which, when the cannon thundered, could but stream
Triumphant over all the storms of death.
Nay, master Wynter and my gallant captains,
I see ye are tamed. Take up your ranks again
In humbleness, remembering ye are kings,
Kings for the sake and by the will of England,
Therefore her servants till your lives' last end.
Comrades, mistake not this, our little fleet
Is freighted with the golden heart of England,
And, if we fail, that golden heart will break.
The world's wide eyes are on us, and our souls
Are woven together into one great flag
Of England. Shall we strike it? Shall it be rent
Asunder with small discord, party strife,
Ephemeral conflict of contemptible tongues,
Or shall it be blazoned, blazoned evermore
On the most heaven-wide page of history?
This is that hour, I know it in my soul,
When we must choose for England. Ye are kings,
And sons of Vikings, exiled from your throne.
Have ye forgotten? Nay, your blood remembers!
There is your kingdom, Vikings, that great ocean
Whose tang is in your nostrils. Ye must choose
Whether to re-assume it now for England,
To claim its thunders for her panoply,
To lay its lightnings in her sovereign hands,
Win her the great commandment of the sea
And let its glory roll with her dominion
Round the wide world for ever, sweeping back
All evil deeds and dreams, or whether to yield
For evermore that kinghood. Ye must learn
Here in this golden dawn our great emprise
Is greater than we knew. Eye hath not seen,
Ear hath not heard what came across the dark
Last night, as there anointed with that blood
I knelt and saw the wonder that should be.
I saw new heavens of freedom, a new earth
Released from all old tyrannies. I saw

The brotherhood of man, for which we rode,
Most ignorant of the splendour of our spears,
Against the crimson dynasties of Spain.
Mother of freedom, home and hope and love,
Our little island, far, how far away,
I saw thee shatter the whole world of hate,
I saw the sunrise on thy helmet flame
With new-born hope for all the world in thee!
Come now, to sea, to sea!"

And ere they knew
What power impelled them, with one mighty cry
They lifted up their hearts to the new dawn
And hastened down the shores and launched the boats,
And in the fierce white out-draught of the waves
Thrust with their brandished oars and the boats leapt
Out, and they settled at the groaning thwarts,
And the white water boiled before their blades,
As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,
His own boat led the way; and ere they knew
What power as of a wind bore them along,
Anchor was up, their hands were on the sheets,
The sails were broken out and that small squadron
Was flying like a sea-bird to the South.

Now to the strait Magellanus they came,
And entered in with ringing shouts of joy.
Nor did they think there was a fairer strait
In all the world than this which lay so calm
Between great silent mountains crowned with snow,
Unutterably lonely. Marvellous
The pomp of dawn and sunset on those heights,
And like a strange new sacrilege the advance
Of prows that ploughed that time-forgotten tide.
But soon rude flaws, cross currents, tortuous channels
Bewildered them, and many a league they drove
As down some vaster Acheron, while the coasts
With wailing voices cursed them all night long,

And once again the hideous fires leapt red
By many a grim wrenched crag and gaunt ravine.
So for a hundred leagues of whirling spume
They groped, till suddenly, far away, they saw
Full of the sunset, like a cup of gold,
The purple Westward portals of the strait.
Onward o'er roughening waves they plunged and reached
Capo Desiderato, where they saw
What seemed stupendous in that lonely place,—
Gaunt, black, and sharp as death against the sky
The Cross, the great black Cross on Cape Desire,
Which dead Magellan raised upon the height
To guide, or so he thought, his wandering ships,
Not knowing they had left him to his doom,
Not knowing how with tears, with tears of joy,
Rapture, and terrible triumph, and deep awe,
Another should come voyaging and read
Unutterable glories in that sign;
While his rough seamen raised their mighty shout
And, once again, before his wondering eyes,
League upon league of awful burnished gold,
Rolled the unknown immeasurable sea.

Now, in those days, as even Magellan held,
Men thought that Southward of the strait there swept
Firm land up to the white Antarticke Pole,
Which now not far they deemed. But when Drake passed
From out the strait to take his Northward way
Up the Pacific coast, a great head-wind
Suddenly smote them; and the heaving seas
Bulged all around them into billowy hills,
Dark rolling mountains, whose majestic crests
Like wild white flames far-blown and savagely flickering
Swept through the clouds; and on their sullen slopes
Like wind-whipt withered leaves those little ships,
Now hurtled to the Zenith and now plunged
Down into bottomless gulfs, were suddenly scattered
And whirled away. Drake, on the *Golden Hynde*,

One moment saw them near him, soaring up
Above him on the huge o'erhanging billows
As if to crash down on his poop; the next,
A mile of howling sea had swept between
Each of those wind-whipt straws, and they were gone
Through roaring deserts of embattled death,
Where, like a hundred thousand chariots charged
With lightnings and with thunders, one great wave
Leading the unleashed ocean down the storm
Hurled them away to Southward.

One last glimpse
Drake caught o' the *Marygold*, when some mighty vortex
Wide as the circle of the wide sea-line
Swept them together again. He saw her staggering
With mast snapt short and wreckage-tangled deck
Where men like insects clung. He saw the waves
Leap over her mangled hulk, like wild white wolves,
Volleying out of the clouds down dismal steeps
Of green-black water. Like a wounded steed
Quivering upon its haunches, up she heaved
Her head to throw them off. Then, in one mass
Of fury crashed the great deep over her,
Trampling her down, down into the nethermost pit,
As with a madman's wrath. She rose no more,
And in the stream of the ocean's hurricane laughter
The *Golden Hynde* went hurtling to the South,
With sails rent into ribbons and her mast
Snapt like a twig. Yea, where Magellan thought
Firm land had been, the little *Golden Hynde*
Whirled like an autumn leaf through league on league
Of bursting seas, chaos on crashing chaos,
A rolling wilderness of charging Alps
That shook the world with their tremendous war;
Grim beetling cliffs that grappled with clamorous gulfs,
Valleys that yawned to swallow the wide heaven;
Immense white-flowering fluctuant precipices,
And hills that swooped down at the throat of hell;

From Pole to Pole, one blanching bursting storm
Of world-wide oceans, where the huge Pacific
Roared greetings to the Atlantic and both swept
In broad white cataracts, league on struggling league,
Pursuing and pursued, immeasurable,
With Titan hands grasping the rent black sky
East, West, North, South. Then, then was battle indeed
Of midget men upon that wisp of grass
The *Golden Hynde*, who, as her masts crashed, hung
Clearing the tiny wreckage from small decks
With ant-like weapons. Not their captain's voice
Availed them now amidst the deafening thunder
Of seas that felt the heavy hand of God,
Only they saw across the blinding spume
In steely flashes, grand and grim, a face,
Like the last glimmer of faith among mankind,
Calm in this warring universe, where Drake
Stood, lashed to his post, beside the helm. Black seas
Buffeted him. Half-stunned he dashed away
The sharp brine from his eagle eyes and turned
To watch some mountain-range come rushing down
As if to o'erwhelm them utterly. Once, indeed,
Welkin and sea were one black wave, white-fanged,
White-crested, and up-heaped so mightily
That, though it coursed more swiftly than a herd
Of Titan steeds upon some terrible plain
Nigh the huge City of Ombos, yet it seemed
Most strangely slow, with all those crumbling crests
Each like a cataract on a mountain-side,
And moved with the steady majesty of doom
High over him. One moment's flash of fear,
And yet not fear, but rather life's regret,
Felt Drake, then laughed a low deep laugh of joy
Such as men taste in battle; yea, 'twas good
To grapple thus with death; one low deep laugh,
One mutter as of a lion about to spring,
Then burst that thunder o'er him. Height o'er height
The heavens rolled down, and waves were all the world.

Meanwhile, in England, dreaming of her sailor,
Far off, his heart's bride waited, of a proud
And stubborn house the bright and gracious flower.
Whom oft her father urged with scanty grace
That Drake was dead and she had best forget
The fellow, he grunted. For her father's heart
Was fettered with small memories, mocked by all
The greater world's traditions and the trace
Of earth's low pedigree among the suns,
Ringed with the terrible twilight of the Gods,
Ringed with the blood-red dusk of dying nations,
His faith was in his grandam's mighty skirt,
And, in that awful consciousness of power,
Had it not been that even in this he feared
To sully her silken flounce or farthingale
Wi' the white dust on his hands, he would have chalked
To his own shame, thinking it shame, the word
Nearest to God in its divine embrace
Of agonies and glories, the dread word
Demos across that door in Nazareth
Whence came the prentice carpenter whose voice
Hath shaken kingdoms down, whose menial gibbet
Rises triumphant o'er the wreck of Empires
And stretches out its arms amongst the Stars.
But she, his daughter, only let her heart
Loveably forge a charter for her love,
Cheat her false creed with faithful faery dreams
That wrapt her love in mystery; thought, perchance,
He came of some unhappy noble race
Ruined in battle for some lost high cause.
And, in the general mixture of men's blood,
Her dream was truer than his whose bloodless pride
Urged her to wed the chinless moon-struck fool
Sprung from five hundred years of idiocy
Who now besought her hand; would force her bear
Some heir to a calf's tongue and a coronet,
Whose cherished taints of blood will please his friends
With "Yea, Sir William's first-born hath the freak,

The family freak, being embryonic. Yea,
And with a fine half-wittedness, forsooth.
Praise God, our children's children yet shall see
The lord o' the manor muttering to himself
At midnight by the gryphon-guarded gates,
Or gnawing his nails in desolate corridors,
Or pacing moonlit halls, dagger in hand,
Waiting to stab his father's pitiless ghost."
So she—the girl—Sweet Bess of Sydenham,
Most innocently proud, was prouder yet
Than thus to let her heart stoop to the lure
Of lordling lovers, though her unstained soul
Slumbered amidst those dreams as in old tales
The princess in the enchanted forest sleeps
Till the prince wakes her with a kiss and draws
The far-flung hues o' the gleaming magic web
Into one heart of flame. And now, for Drake,
She slept like Brynhild in a ring of fire
Which he must pass to win her. For the wrath
Of Spain now flamed, awaiting his return,
All round the seas of home; and even the Queen
Elizabeth blenched, as that tremendous Power
Menaced the heart of England, blenched and vowed
Drake's head to Spain's ambassadors, though still
By subtlety she hoped to find some way
Later to save or warn him ere he came.
Perchance too, nay, most like, he will be slain
Or even now lies dead, out in the West,
She thought, and then the promise works no harm.
But, day by day, there came as on the wings
Of startled winds from o'er the Spanish Main,
Strange echoes as of sacked and clamouring ports
And battered gates of fabulous golden cities,
A murmur out of the sunset, of Peru,
A sea-bird's wail from Lima. While no less
The wrathful menace gathered up its might
All round our little isle; till now the King
Philip of Spain half secretly decreed

The building of huge docks from which to launch
A Fleet Invincible that should sweep the seas
Of all the world, throttle with one broad grasp
All Protestant rebellion, having stablished
His red feet in the Netherlands, thence to hurl
His whole World-Empire at this little isle,
England, our mother, home and hope and love,
And bend her neck beneath his yoke. For now
No half surrender sought he. At his back,
Robed with the scarlet of a thousand martyrs,
Admonishing him, stood Rome, and, in her hand,
Grasping the Cross of Christ by its great hilt,
She pointed it, like a dagger, tow'rds the throat
Of England.

One long year, two years had passed
Since Drake set sail from grey old Plymouth Sound;
And in those woods of faery wonder still
Slumbered his love in steadfast faith. But now
With louder lungs her father urged—"He is dead:
Forget him. There is one that loves you, seeks
Your hand in marriage, and he is a goodly match
E'en for my daughter. You shall wed him, Bess!'
But when the new-found lover came to woo,
Glancing in summer silks and radiant hose,
Whipt doublet and enormous pointed shoon,
She played him like a fish and sent him home
Spluttering with dismay, a stickleback
Discoloured, a male minnow of dimpled streams
With all its rainbows paling in the prime,
To hide amongst his lilies, while once more
She took her casement seat that overlooked
The sea and read in Master Spenser's book,
Which Francis gave "To my dear lady and queen
Bess," that most rare processional of love—
"*Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song!*"
Yet did her father urge her day by day,
And day by day her mother dinned her ears

With petty saws, as—"When *I* was a girl,"
And "I remember what *my* father said,"
And "Love, oh feather-fancies plucked from geese
You call your poets!" Yet she hardly meant
To slight true love, save in her daughter's heart;
For the old folk ever find it hard to see
The passion of their children. When it wakes,
The child becomes a stranger. That small bird
Which was its heart hath left the fostering nest
And flown they know not whither. So with Bess;
But since her soul still slumbered, and the moons
Rolled on and blurred her soul's particular love
With the vague unknown impulse of her youth,
Her brave resistance often melted now
In tears, and her will weakened day by day;
Till on a dreadful summer morn there came,
Borne by a wintry flaw, home to the Thames,
A bruised and battered ship, all that was left,
So said her crew, of Drake's ill-fated fleet.
John Wynter, her commander, told the tale
Of how the *Golden Hynde* and *Marygold*
Had by the wind Euroclydon been driven
Sheer o'er the howling edges of the world;
Of how himself by God's good providence
Was hurled into the strait *Magellanus;*
Of how on the horrible frontiers of the Void
He had watched in vain, lit red with beacon-fires
The desperate coasts o' the black abyss, whence none
Ever returned, though many a week he watched
Beneath the Cross; and only saw God's wrath
Burn through the heavens and devastate the mountains,
And hurl unheard of oceans roaring down
After the lost ships in one cataract
Of thunder and splendour and fury and rolling doom.

Then, with a bitter triumph in his face,
As if this were the natural end of all
Such vile plebeians, as if he had foreseen it,

As if himself had breathed a tactful hint
Into the aristocratic ears of God,
Her father broke the last frail barriers down,
Broke the poor listless will o' the lonely girl,
Who careless now of aught but misery
Promised to wed their lordling. Mighty speed
They made to press that loveless marriage on;
And ere the May had mellowed into June
Her marriage eve had come. Her cold hands held
Drake's gift. She scarce could see her name, writ broad
By that strong hand as it was, *To my queen Bess.*
She looked out through her casement o'er the sea,
Listening its old enchanted moan, which seemed
Striving to speak, she knew not what. Its breath
Fluttered the roses round the grey old walls,
And shook the starry jasmine. A great moon
Hung like a red lamp in the sycamore.
A corn-crake in the hay-fields far away
Chirped like a cricket, and the night-jar churred
His passionate love-song. Soft-winged moths besieged
Her lantern. Under many a star-stabbed elm
The nightingale began his golden song,
Whose warm thick notes are each a drop of blood
From that small throbbing breast against the thorn
Pressed close to turn the white rose into red;
Even as her lawn-clad may-white bosom pressed
Quivering against the bars, while her dark hair
Streamed round her shoulders and her small bare feet
Gleamed in the dusk. Then spake she to her maid—
"I cannot sleep, I cannot sleep to-night.
Bring thy lute thither and sing. Say, dost thou think
The dead can watch us from their distant world?
Can our dead friends be near us when we weep?
I wish 'twere so! for then my love would come,
No matter then how far, my love would come,
And press a light kiss on these aching eyes
And say, 'Grieve not, dear heart, for I know all,
And I forgive thee.' Ah, then, I should sleep,

Sleep, sleep and dream once more. Last night, last night
I know not if it were that song of thine
Which tells of some poor lover, crazed with pain,
Who wanders to the grave-side of his love
And knocks at that cold door until his love
Opens it, and they two for some brief while
Forget their doom in one another's arms
Once more; for, oh, last night, I had a dream;
My love came to me through the Gates of Death,
I know not how he came, I only know
His arms were round me, and, from far away,
From far beyond the stars it seemed, his voice
Breathed in unutterable grief, farewells,
Of shuddering sweetness, clasped in one small word
Sweetheart, a joy untold, an untold pain,
Far, far away, although his breath beat warm
Against my cheek and dried mine own poor tears.
Ah, sing that song once more; for I have heard
There are some songs, and this was one I am sure,
Like the grey poppies of those dreaming fields
Where poor dead lovers drift, and in their pain
We lose our own. Give me that poppied sleep,
And if—in dreams—I touch my true love's lips,
Trust me I will not ask ever to wake
Again." Whereat the maiden touched her lute
And sang, low-toned, with pity in her eyes.

Then Bess bowed down her lovely head: her breast
Heaved with short sobs and, sickening at the heart,
She grasped the casement, moaning, "Love, Love, Love,
Come quickly, come, before it is too late,
Come quickly, oh come quickly."
Then her maid
Slipped a soft arm around her and gently drew
The supple quivering body, shaken with sobs,
And all that firm young sweetness, to her breast,
And led her to her couch, and all night long
She watched beside her, till the marriage morn

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HAWARDEN

Blushed in the heartless East. Then swiftly flew
The pitiless moments, till—as in a dream—
And borne along by dreams, or like a lily
Cut from its anchorage in the stream to glide
Down the smooth bosom of an unknown world
Through fields of unknown blossom, so moved Bess
Amongst her maids, as the procession passed
Forth to the little church upon the cliffs,
And, as in those days was the bridal mode,
Her lustrous hair in billowing beauty streamed
Dishevelled o'er her shoulders, while the sun
Caressed her bent and glossy head, and shone
Over the deep blue, white-flaked, wrinkled sea,
On full-blown rosy-petalled sails that flashed
Like flying blossoms fallen from her crown.

BOOK V.

I.

With the fruit of Aladdin's garden clustering thick in her hold,
With rubies awash in her scuppers and her bilge ablaze with gold,
A world in arms behind her to sever her heart from home,
The Golden Hynde *drove onward over the glittering foam.*

II.

If we go as we came, by the Southward, we meet wi' the fleets of Spain!
'Tis a thousand to one against us: we'll turn to the West again!
We have captured a China pilot, his charts and his golden keys:
We'll sail to the golden Gateway, over the golden seas.

Over the immeasurable molten gold
Wrapped in a golden haze, onward they drew;
And now they saw the tiny purple quay
Grow larger and darker and brighten into brown
Across the swelling sparkle of the waves.
Brown on the quay, a train of tethered mules
Munched at the nose-bags, while a Spaniard drowsed
On guard beside what seemed at first a heap
Of fish, then slowly turned to silver bars
Up-piled and glistering in the enchanted sun.
Nor did that sentry wake as, like a dream,
The *Golden Hynde* divided the soft sleep
Of warm green lapping water, sidled up,
Sank sail, and moored beside the quay. But Drake,
Lightly leaping ashore and stealing nigh,

Picked up the Spaniard's long gay-ribboned gun
Close to his ear. At once, without a sound,
The watchman opened his dark eyes and stared
As at strange men who suddenly had come,
Borne by some magic carpet, from the stars;
Then, with a courtly bow, his right hand thrust
Within the lace embroideries of his breast,
Politely Drake, with pained apologies
For this disturbance of a cavalier
Napping on guard, straightway resolved to make
Complete amends, by now relieving him
Of these—which doubtless troubled his repose—
These anxious bars of silver. With that word
Two seamen leaped ashore and, gathering up
The bars in a stout old patch of tawny sail,
Slung them aboard. No sooner this was done
Than out o' the valley, like a foolish jest
Out of the mouth of some great John-a-dreams,
In soft procession of buffoonery
A woolly train of llamas proudly came
Stepping by two and two along the quay,
Laden with pack on pack of silver bars
And driven by a Spaniard. His amaze
The seamen greeted with profuser thanks
For his most punctual thought and opportune
Courtesy. None the less they must avouch
It pained them much to see a cavalier
Turned carrier; and, at once, they must insist
On easing him of that too sordid care.

. . . . . .

Then out from Tarapaca once again
They sailed, their hold a glimmering mine of wealth,
Towards Arica and Lima, where they deemed
The prize of prizes waited unaware.
For every year a gorgeous galleon sailed
With all the harvest of Potosi's mines
And precious stones from dead king's diadems,
Aztecs' and Incas' gem-encrusted crowns,

Pearls from the glimmering Temples of the Moon,
Rich opals with their milky rainbow-clouds,
White diamonds from the Temples of the Sun,
Carbuncles flaming scarlet, amethysts,
Rubies, and sapphires; these to Spain she brought
To glut her priestly coffers. Now not far
Ahead they deemed she lay upon that coast,
Crammed with the lustrous Indies, wrung with threat
And torture from the naked Indian slaves.
To him that spied her top-sails first a prize
Drake offered of the wondrous chain he wore;
And every seaman, every ship-boy, watched
Not only for the prize, but for their friends,
If haply these had weathered through the storm.
Nor did they know their friends had homeward turned,
Bearing to England and to England's Queen,
And his heart's queen, the tale that Drake was dead.

Northward they cruised along a warm wild coast
That like a most luxurious goddess drowsed
Supine to heaven, her arms behind her head,
One knee up-thrust to make a mountain-peak,
Her rosy breasts up-heaving their soft snow
In distant Andes, and her naked side
With one rich curve for half a hundred leagues
Bathed by the creaming foam; her heavy hair
Fraught with the perfume of a thousand forests
Tossed round about her beauty; and her mouth
A scarlet mystery of distant flower
Up-turned to take the kisses of the sun.
But like a troop of boys let loose from school
The adventurers went by, startling the stillness
Of that voluptuous dream-encumbered shore
With echoing shouts of laughter and alien song.

But as they came to Arica, from afar
They heard the clash of bells upon the breeze,
And knew that Rumour with her thousand wings

Had rushed before them. Horsemen in the night
Had galloped through the white coast-villages
And spread the dreadful cry "El Draque" abroad
And when the gay adventurers drew nigh
They found the quays deserted, and the ships
All flown, except one little fishing-boat
Wherein an old man like a tortoise moved
A wrinkled head above the rusty net
His crawling hands repaired. He seemed to dwell
Outside the world of war and peace, outside
Everything save his daily task, and cared
No whit who else might win or lose; for all
The pilot asked of him without demur
He answered, scarcely looking from his work.
A galleon laden with eight hundred bars
Of silver, not three hours ago had flown
Northward, he muttered. Ere the words were out,
The will of Drake thrilled through the *Golden Hynde*
Like one sharp trumpet-call, and ere they knew
What power impelled them, crowding on all sail
Northward they surged, and roaring down the wind
At Chiuli, port of Arequipa, saw
The chase at anchor. Wondering they came
With all the gunners waiting at their guns
Bare-armed and silent—nearer, nearer yet,—
Close to the enemy. But no sight or sound
Of living creature stirred upon her decks.
Only a great grey cat lay in the sun
Upon a warm smooth cannon-butt. A chill
Ran through the veins of even the boldest there
At that too peaceful silence. Cautiously
Drake neared her in his pinnace: cautiously,
Cutlass in hand, up that mysterious hull
He clomb, and wondered, as he climbed, to breathe
The friendly smell o' the pitch and hear the waves
With their incessant old familiar sound
Crackling and slapping against her windward flank.
A ship of dreams was that; for when they reached

The silent deck, they saw no crouching forms,
They heard no sound of life. Only the hot
Creak of the cordage whispered in the sun.
The cat stood up and yawned, and slunk away
Slowly, with furtive glances. The great hold
Was empty, and the rich cabin stripped and bare.
Suddenly one of the seamen with a cry
Pointed where, close inshore, a little boat
Stole towards the town; and, with a louder cry,
Drake bade his men aboard the *Golden Hynde*.
Scarce had they pulled two hundred yards away
When, with a roar that seemed to buffet the heavens
And rip the heart of the sea out, one red flame
Blackened with fragments, the great galleon burst
Asunder! All the startled waves were strewn
With wreckage; and Drake laughed—"My lads, we have diced
With death to-day, and won! My merry lads,
It seems that Spain is bolting with the stakes!
Now, if I have to stretch the skies for sails
And summon the blasts of God up from the South
To fill my canvas, I will overhaul
Those dusky devils with the treasure-ship
That holds our hard-earned booty. Pull hard all,
Hard for the *Golden Hynde*."

* * * * * *

And so they came
At dead of night on Callao de Lima!
They saw the harbour lights across the waves
Glittering, and the shadowy hulks of ships
Gathered together like a flock of sheep
Within the port. With shouts and clink of chains
A shadowy ship was entering from the North,
And like the shadow of that shadow slipped
The *Golden Hynde* beside her thro' the gloom;
And side by side they anchored in the port
Amidst the shipping! Over the dark tide
A small boat from the customs-house drew near.

A sleepy, yawning, gold-laced officer
Boarded the *Golden Hynde*, and with a cry,
Stumbling against a cannon-butt, he saw
The bare-armed British seamen in the gloom
All waiting by their guns. Wildly he plunged
Over the side and urged his boat away,
Crying, "El Draque! El Draque!" At that dread word
The darkness filled with clamour, and the ships,
Cutting their cables, drifted here and there
In mad attempts to seek the open sea.
Wild lights burnt hither and thither, and all the port,
One furnace of confusion, heaved and seethed
In terror; for each shadow of the night,
Nay, the great night itself, was all *El Draque.*
The Dragon's wings were spread from quay to quay,
The very lights that burnt from mast to mast
And flared across the tide kindled his breath
To fire; while here and there a British pinnace
Slipped softly thro' the roaring gloom and glare,
Ransacking ship by ship; for each one thought
A fleet had come upon them. Each gave up
The struggle as each was boarded; while, elsewhere,
Cannon to cannon, friends bombarded friends.

Yet not one ounce of treasure in Callao
They found; for, fourteen days before they came,
That greatest treasure-ship of Spain, with all
The gorgeous harvest of that year, had sailed
For Panama: her ballast—silver bars;
Her cargo—rubies, emeralds, and gold.

Out through the clamour and the darkness, out,
Out to the harbour mouth, the *Golden Hynde*,
Steered by the iron soul of Drake, returned:
And where the way was blocked, her cannon clove
A crimson highway to the midnight sea.
Then Northward, Northward, o'er the jewelled main,

Under the white moon like a storm they drove
In quest of the *Cacafuego.* Fourteen days
Her start was; and at dawn the fair wind sank,
And chafing lay the *Golden Hynde,* becalmed;
While, on the hills, the Viceroy of Peru
Marched down from Lima with two thousand men,
And sent out four huge ships of war to sink
Or capture the fierce Dragon. Loud laughed Drake
To see them creeping nigh, urged with great oars,
Then suddenly pause; for none would be the first
To close with him. And, ere they had steeled their hearts
To battle, a fair breeze broke out anew,
And Northward sped the little *Golden Hynde*
In quest of the lordliest treasure-ship of Spain.
. . . . . .
Behind her lay a world in arms; for now
Wrath and confusion clamoured for revenge
From sea to sea. Spain claimed the pirate's head
From England, and awaited his return
With all her tortures. And where'er he passed
He sowed the dragon's teeth, and everywhere
Cadmean broods of arméd men arose
And followed, followed on his fiery trail.
Men toiled at Lima to fit out a fleet
Grim enough to destroy him. All night long
The flare went up from cities on the coast
Where men like naked devils toiled to cast
Cannon that might have overwhelmed the powers
Of Michael when he drave that hideous rout
Through livid chaos to the black abyss.
Small hope indeed there seemed of safe return;
But Northward sped the little *Golden Hynde,*
The world-watched midget ship of eighteen guns,
Undaunted; and upon the second dawn
Sighted a galleon, not indeed the chase,
Yet worth a pause; for out of her they took—
Embossed with emeralds large as pigeon's eggs—
A golden crucifix, with eighty pounds

In weight of gold. The rest they left behind;
And onward, onward, to the North they flew—
A score of golden miles, a score of green,
An hundred miles, eight hundred miles of foam,
Rainbows and fire, ransacking as they went
Ship after ship for news o' the chase and gold;
Learning from every capture that they drew
Nearer and nearer. At Truxillo, dim
And dreaming city, a-drowse with purple flowers,
She had paused, ay, paused to take a freight of gold:
At Paita—she had passed two days in front,
Only two days, two days ahead; nay, one!
At Quito, close inshore, a youthful page,
Bright-eyed, ran up the rigging and cried, "A sail!
A sail! The *Cacafuego!* And the chain
Is mine!" And by the strange cut of her sails,
Whereof they had been told in Callao,
They knew her!

Heavily laden with her gems,
Lazily drifting with her golden fruitage,
Over the magic seas they saw her hull
Loom as they onward drew; but Drake, for fear
The prey might take alarm and run ashore,
Trailed wine-skins, filled with water, o'er the side
To hold his ship back, till the darkness fell,
And with the night the off-shore wind arose.
At last the sun sank down, the rosy light
Faded from Andes' peaked and bosomed snow:
The night-wind rose: the wine-skins were up-hauled;
And, like a hound unleashed, the *Golden Hynde*
Leapt forward thro' the gloom.
A cable's length
Divided them. The *Cacafuego* heard
A rough voice in the darkness bidding her
Heave to! She held her course. Drake gave the word.
A broadside shattered the night, and over her side
Her main-yard clattered like a broken wing!

On to her decks the British sea-dogs swarmed,
Cutlass in hand: that fight was at an end.

The ship was cleared, a prize crew placed on board,
Then both ships turned their heads to the open sea.
At dawn, being out of sight of land, they 'gan
Examine the great prize. None ever knew
Save Drake and Gloriana what wild wealth
They had captured there. Thus much at least was known:
An hundredweight of gold, and twenty tons
Of silver bullion; thirteen chests of coins;
Nuggets of gold unnumbered; countless pearls,
Diamonds, and emeralds; but the worth of these
Was past all reckoning. In the crimson dawn,
Ringed with the lonely pomp of sea and sky,
The naked-footed seamen bathed knee-deep
In gold and gathered up Aladdin's fruit—
All-coloured gems—and tossed them in the sun.
The hold like one great elfin orchard gleamed
With dusky globes and tawny glories piled,
Hesperian apples, heap on mellow heap,
Rich with the hues of sunset, rich and ripe
And ready for the enchanted cider-press;
An Emperor's ransom in each burning orb;
A kingdom's purchase in each clustered bough;
The freedom of all slaves in every chain.

BOOK VI.

Now like the soul of Ophir on the sea
Glittered the *Golden Hynde*, and all her heart
Turned home to England. As a child that finds
A ruby ring upon the highway, straight
Homeward desires to run with it, so she
Yearned for her home and country. Yet the world
Was all in arms behind her. Fleet on fleet
Awaited her return. Along the coast
The very churches melted down their chimes
And cast them into cannon. To the South
A thousand cannon watched Magellan's straits,
And fleets were scouring all the sea like hounds,
With orders that where'er they came on Drake,
Although he were the Dragon of their dreams,
They should out-blast his thunders and convey,
Dead or alive, his body back to Spain.

And Drake laughed out and said, "My trusty lads
Of Devon, you have made the wide world ring
With England's name; you have swept one half the seas
From sky to sky; and in our oaken hold
You have packed the gorgeous Indies. We shall sail
But slowly with such wealth. If we return,
We are one against ten thousand! We will seek
The fabled Northern passage, take our gold
Safe home; then out to sea again and try
Our guns against their guns."

. . . . . .

And as they sailed
Northward, they swooped on warm blue Guatulco
For food and water. Nigh the dreaming port
The grand alcaldes in high conclave sat,
Blazing with gold and scarlet, as they tried
A batch of negro slaves upon the charge
Of idleness in Spanish mines; dumb slaves,
With bare scarred backs and labour-broken knees,
And sorrowful eyes like those of wearied kine
Spent from the ploughing. Even as the judge
Rose to condemn them to the knotted lash
The British boat's crew, quiet and compact,
Entered the court. The grim judicial glare
Grew wider with amazement, and the judge
Staggered against his gilded throne.
"I thank
Almighty God," cried Drake, "who hath given me this
—That I who once, in ignorance, procured
Slaves for the golden bawdy-house of Spain,
May now, in England's name, help to requite
That wrong. For now I say in England's name,
Where'er her standard flies, the slave shall stand
Upright, the shackles fall from off his limbs.
Unyoke the prisoners: tell them they are men
Once more, not beasts of burden. Set them free;
But take these gold and scarlet popinjays
Aboard my *Golden Hynde;* and let them write
An order that their town shall now provide
My boats with food and water."
This being done,
The slaves being placed in safety on the prize,
The *Golden Hynde* revictualled and the casks
Replenished with fresh water, Drake set free
The judges and swept Northward once again;
And, off the coast of Nicaragua, found
A sudden treasure better than all gold;
For on the track of the China trade they caught
A ship whereon two China pilots sailed,

And in their cabin lay the secret charts,
Red hieroglyphs of Empire, unknown charts
Of silken sea-roads down the golden West
Where all roads meet and East and West are one.
And, with that mystery stirring in their hearts
Like a strange cry from home, Northward they swept
And Northward, till the soft luxurious coasts
Hardened, the winds grew bleak, the great green waves
Loomed high like mountains round them, and the spray
Froze on their spars and yards. Fresh from the warmth
Of tropic seas the men could hardly brook
That cold; and when the floating hills of ice
Like huge green shadows crowned with ghostly snow
Went past them with strange whispers in the gloom,
Or took mysterious colours in the dawn,
Their hearts misgave them, and they found no way;
But all was iron shore and icy sea.
And one by one the crew fell sick to death
In that fierce winter, and the land still ran
Westward and showed no passage. Tossed with storms,
Onward they plunged, or furrowed gentler tides
Of ice-lit emerald that made the prow
A faery beak of some enchanted ship
Flinging wild rainbows round her as she drove
Thro' seas unsailed by mortal mariners,
Past isles unhailed of any human voice,
Where sound and silence mingled in one song
Or utter solitude. Ever as they went
The flag of England blazoned the broad breeze,
Northward, where never ship had sailed before,
Northward, till lost in helpless wonderment,
Dazed as a soul awakening from the dream
Of death to some wild dawn in Paradise
(Yet burnt with cold as they whose very tears
Freeze on their faces where Cocytus wails)
All world-worn, bruised, wing-broken, wracked, and wrenched,
Blackened with lightning, scarred as with evil deeds,

But all embalmed in beauty by that sun
Which never sets, bosomed in peace at last
The *Golden Hynde* rocked on a glittering calm.
Seas that no ship had ever sailed, from sky
To glistening sky, swept round them. Glory and gleam,
Glamour and lucid rapture and diamond air
Embraced her broken spars, begrimed with gold
Her gloomy hull, rocking upon a sphere
New made, it seemed, mysterious with the first
Mystery of the world, where holy sky
And sacred sea shone like the primal Light
Of God, a-stir with whispering sea-bird's wings
And glorious with clouds. Only, all day,
All night, the rhythmic utterance of His will
In the deep sigh of seas, that washed His throne,
Rose and relapsed across Eternity,
Timed to the pulse of æons. All their world
Seemed strange as unto us the great new heavens
And glittering shores, if on some aery bark
To Saturn's coasts we came and traced no more
The tiny gleam of our familiar earth
Far off, but heard tremendous oceans roll
Round unimagined continents, and saw
Terrible mountains unto which our Alps
Were less than mole-hills, and such gaunt ravines
Cleaving them and such cataracts roaring down
As burst the gates of our earth-moulded senses,
Pour the eternal glory on our souls,
And, while ten thousand chariots bring the dawn,
Hurl us poor midgets trembling to our knees.
Glory and glamour and rapture of lucid air,
Ice cold, with subtle colours of the sky
Embraced her broken spars, belted her hulk
With brilliance, while she dipped her jacinth beak
In waves of mounded splendour, and sometimes
A great ice-mountain flashed and floated by
Throned on the waters, pinnacled and crowned
With all the smouldering jewels in the world;

Or in the darkness, glimmering berg on berg,
All emerald to the moon, went by like ghosts
Whispering to the South.
There, as they lay,
Waiting a wind to fill the stiffened sails,
Their hearts remembered that in England now
The Spring was nigh, and in that lonely sea
The skilled musicians filled their eyes with home.

Song.

I.

It is the Spring-tide now!
Under the hawthorn-bough
The milkmaid goes:
Her eyes are violets blue
Washed with the morning dew,
Her mouth a rose.
It is the Spring-tide now.

II.

The lanes are growing sweet,
The lambkins frisk and bleat
In all the meadows:
The glossy dappled kine
Blink in the warm sunshine,
Cooling their shadows.
It is the Spring-tide now.

III.

Soon hand in sunburnt hand
Thro' God's green fairyland,
England, our home,

Whispering as they stray
Adown the primrose way,
Lovers will roam.
It is the Spring-tide now.

And then, with many a chain of linkéd sweetness,
Harmonious gold, they drew their hearts and souls
Back, back to England, thoughts of wife and child,
Mother and sweetheart and the old companions,
The twisted streets of London and the deep
Delight of Devon lanes, all softly voiced
In words of cadences, made them breathe hard
And gaze across the everlasting sea,
Craving for that small isle so far away.

Song.

I.

O, you beautiful land,
Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright
With the flowery largesse of May
Sweet from the palm of her hand
Out-flung, till the hedges grew white
As the green-arched billows with spray.

II.

White from the fall of her feet
The daisies awake in the sun!
Cliff-side and valley and plain
With the breath of the thyme growing sweet
Laugh, for the Spring is begun;
And Love hath turned homeward again.

O, you beautiful land! &c.

III.

Where should the home be of Love,
But there, where the hawthorn-tree blows,
And the milkmaid trips out with her pail
And the skylark in heaven above
Sings, till the West is a rose
And the East is a nightingale?

O, you beautiful land! &c.

IV.

There where the sycamore trees
Are shading the satin-skinned kine,
And oaks, whose brethren of old
Conquered the strength of the seas,
Grow broad in the sunlight and shine
Crowned with their cressets of gold;

O, you beautiful land! &c.

V.

Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright
With rose-coloured cloudlets above;
Billowing broad and grand
Where the meadows with blossom are white
For the foot-fall, the foot-fall of Love.
O, you beautiful land!

VI.

How should we sing of thy beauty,
England, mother of men,
We that can look in thine eyes
And see there the splendour of duty
Deep as the depth of their ken,
Wide as the ring of thy skies.

VII.

O, you beautiful land,
Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright
With the flowery largesse of May
Sweet from the palm of her hand
Out-flung, till the hedges grew white
As the green-arched billows with spray.
O, you beautiful land!

And when a fair wind rose again, there seemed
No hope of passage by that fabled way
Northward, and suddenly Drake put down his helm
And, with some wondrous purpose in his eyes,
Turned Southward once again, until he found
A lonely natural harbour on the coast
Near San Francisco, where the cliffs were white
Like those of England, and the soft soil teemed
With gold. There they careened the *Golden Hynde*—
Her keel being thick with barnacles and weeds—
And built a fort and dockyard to refit
Their little wandering home, not half so large
As many a coasting barque to-day that scarce
Would cross the Channel, yet she had swept the seas
Of half the world, and even now prepared
For new adventures greater than them all.
And as the sound of chisel and hammer broke
The stillness of that shore, shy figures came,
Keen-faced and grave-eyed Indians, from the woods
To bow before the strange white-faced new-comers
As gods. Whereat the chaplain much aghast
Persuaded them with signs and broken words
And grunts that even Drake was but a man,
Whom none the less the savages would crown
With woven flowers and barbarous ritual
King of New Albion—so the seamen called
That land, remembering the white cliffs of home.
Much they implored, with many a sign and cry,

Which by the rescued slaves upon the prize
Were part interpreted, that Drake would stay
And rule them; and the vision of the great
Empire of Englishmen arose and flashed
A moment round them, on that lonely shore.
A small and weather-beaten band they stood,
Bronzed seamen by the laughing rescued slaves,
Ringed with gigantic loneliness and saw
An Empire that should liberate the world;
A Power before the lightning of whose arms
Darkness should die and all oppression cease;
A Federation of the strong and weak,
Whereby the weak were strengthened and the strong
Made stronger in the increasing good of all;
A gathering up of one another's loads;
A turning of the wasteful rage of war
To accomplish large and fruitful tasks of peace,
Even as the strength of some great stream is turned
To grind the corn for bread. E'en thus on England
That splendour dawned which those in dreams foresaw
And saw not with their living eyes, but thou,
England, mayst lift up eyes at last and see,
Who, like that angel of the Apocalypse
Hast set one foot upon thy sea-girt isle,
The other upon the waters, and canst raise
Now, if thou wilt, above the assembled nations,
The trumpet of deliverance to thy lips.

. . . . . .

At last their task was done, the *Golden Hynde*
Undocked, her white wings hoisted; and away
Westward they swiftly glided from that shore
Where, with a wild lament, their Indian friends,
Knee-deep i' the creaming foam, all stood at gaze,
Like men that for one moment in their lives
Have seen a mighty drama cross their path
And played upon the stage of vast events
Knowing, henceforward, all their life is nought.
But Westward sped the little *Golden Hynde*

Across the uncharted ocean, with no guide
But that great homing cry of all their hearts.
Far out of sight of land they steered, straight out
Across the great Pacific, in those days
When even the compass proved no trusty guide,
Straight out they struck in that small bark, straight out
Week after week, without one glimpse of aught
But heaving seas, across the uncharted waste
Straight to the sunset. Laughingly they sailed,
With all that gorgeous booty in their holds,
A splendour dragging deep through seas of doom,
A prey to the first great hurricane that blew
Except their God averted it. And still
Their skilled musicians cheered the way along
To shores beyond the sunset and the sea.
And oft at nights, the yellow fo'c'sle lanthorn
Swung over swarthy singing faces grouped
Within the four small wooden walls that made
Their home and shut them from the unfathomable
Depths of mysterious gloom without that rolled
All round them; or Tom Moone would heartily troll
A simple stave that struggled oft with thoughts
Beyond its reach, yet reached their hearts no less.

SONG.

I.

Good luck befall you, mariners all
That sail this world so wide!
Whither we go, not yet we know:
We steer by wind and tide.
Be it right or wrong, I sing this song;
For now it seems to me
Men steer their souls thro' rocks and shoals
As mariners use by sea.

Chorus: *As mariners use by sea,*
My lads,
As mariners use by sea!

II.

And now they plough to windward, now
They drive before the gale!
Now are they hurled across the world
With torn and tattered sail;
Yet, as they will, they steer and still
Defy the world's rude glee:
Till death o'erwhelm them, mast and helm,
They ride and rule the sea.

Chorus: *They ride and rule the sea,*
My lads,
They ride and rule the sea!

. . . . . .

Meantime, in England, Bess of Sydenham,
Drake's love and queen, being told that Drake was dead,
And numbed with grief, obeying her father's will
That dreadful summer morn in bridal robes
Had passed to wed her father's choice. The sun
Streamed smiling on her as she went, half-dazed,
Amidst her smiling maids. Nigh to the sea
The church was, and the mellow marriage bells
Mixed with its music. Far away, white sails
Spangled the sapphire, white as flying blossoms
New-fallen from her crown; but as the glad
And sad procession neared the little church,
From some strange ship-of-war, far out at sea,
There came a sudden tiny puff of smoke—
And then a dull strange throb, a whistling hiss,
And scarce a score of yards away a shot
Ploughed up the turf. None knew, none ever knew
From whence it came, whether a perilous jest
Of English seamen, or a wanton deed
Of Spaniards, or mere accident; but all
Her maids in flight were scattered. Bess awoke
As from a dream, crying aloud—"'Tis he,
'Tis he that sends this message. He is not dead.

I will not pass the porch. Nay, take me home,
'Twas he that sent that message."
Nought availed,
Her father's wrath, her mother's tears, her maids'
Cunning persuasions, nought; home she returned,
And waited for the dead to come to life;
Nor waited long; for ere that month was out,
Rumour on rumour reached the coasts of England,
Borne as it seemed on sea-birds' wings, that Drake
Was on his homeward way.

BOOK VII.

The imperial wrath of Spain, one world-wide sea
Of furious pomp and flouted power, now surged
All round this little isle, with one harsh roar
Deepening for Drake's return—"The *Golden Hynde*
Ye swore had foundered, Drake ye swore was drowned,
They are on their homeward way! The head of Drake!
What answer, what account, what recompense
Now can ye yield our might invincible
Except the head of Drake, whose bloody deeds
Have reddened the Pacific, who hath sacked
Cities of gold, burnt fleets, and ruined realms,
What answer but his life?"
To which the Queen
Who saw the storm of Europe slowly rising
In awful menace o'er her wave-beat throne,
And midmost of the storm, the ensanguined robes
Of Rome and murderous hand, grasping the Cross
By its great hilt, pointing it like a brand
Blood-blackened at the throat of England, saw
Like skeleton castles wrapt in rolling mist
The monstrous engines and designs of war,
The secret fleets and brooding panoplies
Philip prepared, growing from day to day
In dusk armipotent and embattled gloom
Surrounding her, replied: "The life of Drake,
If, on our strict enquiry, in due order
We find that Drake have hurt our friends, mark well,
If Drake have hurt our friends, the life of Drake."

. . . . . .

And while the world awaited him, as men
Might wait an earthquake, quietly one grey morn,
One grey October morn of mist and rain
When all the window-panes in Plymouth dripped
With listless drizzle, and only through her streets
Rumbled the death-cart with its dreary bell
Monotonously plangent (for the plague
Had lately like a vampire sucked the veins
Of Plymouth town), a little weed-clogged ship,
Grey as a ghost, glided into the Sound
And anchored, scarce a soul to see her come,
And not an eye to read the faded scroll
Around her battered prow—the *Golden Hynde.*
Then, thro' the dumb grey misty listless port,
A rumour like the colours of the dawn
Streamed o'er the shining quays, up the wet streets,
In at the tavern doors, flashed from the panes
And turned them into diamonds, fired the pools
In every muddy lane with Spanish gold,
Flushed in a thousand faces, Drake is come!
Down every crowding alley the urchins leaped
Tossing their caps, the *Golden Hynde* is come!
Fisherman, citizen, prentice, dame and maid,
Fat justice, floury baker, bloated butcher,
Fishwife, minister and apothecary,
Yea, even the driver of the death-cart, leaving
His ghastly load, using his dreary bell
To merrier purpose, down the seething streets,
Panting, tumbling, jostling, helter-skelter
To the water-side, to the water-side they rushed,
And some knee-deep beyond it, all one wild
Welcome to Francis Drake!
Wild kerchiefs fluttering, thunderous hurrahs
Rolling from quay to quay, a thousand arms
Outstretched to that grey ghostly little ship
At whose masthead the British flag still flew;
Then, over all, in one tumultuous tide
Of pealing joy, the Plymouth bells outclashed
A nation's welcome home to Francis Drake.

The very *Golden Hynde*, no idle dream,
The little ship that swept the Spanish Main,
Carelessly lying there, in Plymouth Sound,
The *Golden Hynde*, the wonder of the world,
A glory wrapt her greyness, and no boat
Dared yet approach, save one, with Drake's close friends,
Who came to warn him: "England stands alone
And Drake is made the price of England's peace.
The Queen, perforce, must temporise with Spain,
The Invincible! She hath forfeited thy life
To Spain, against her will. Only by this
Rejection of thee as a privateer
She averted instant war; for now the menace
Of Spain draws nigher, looms darker every hour.
The world is made Spain's footstool. Philip, the King,
E'en now hath added to her boundless power
Without a blow, the vast domains and wealth
Of Portugal, and deadlier yet, a coast
That crouches over against us. Cadiz holds
A huge Armada, none knows where to strike;
And even this day a flying horseman brought
Rumours that Spain hath landed a great force
In Ireland. Mary of Scotland only waits
The word to stab us in the side for Rome.
The Queen, weighed down by Burleigh and the friends
Of peace at any cost, may yet be driven
To make thy life our ransom, which indeed
She hath already sworn, or seemed to swear."

To whom Drake answered, "Gloriana lives;
And in her life mine only fear lies dead,
Mine only fear, for England, not myself.
Willing am I and glad, as I have lived,
To die for England's sake.
Yet, lest the Queen be driven now to restore
This cargo that I bring her—a world's wealth,
The golden springs of all the power of Spain,
The jewelled hearts of all those cruel realms

(For I have plucked them out) beyond the sea;
Lest she be driven to yield them up again
For Rome and Rome's delight, I will warp out
Behind St Nicholas' Island. The fierce plague
In Plymouth shall be colour and excuse,
Until my courier return from court
With Gloriana's will. If it be death,
I'll out again to sea, strew its rough floor
With costlier largesses than kings can throw,
And, ere I die, will singe the Spaniard's beard
And set the fringe of his imperial robe
Blazing along his coasts. Then let him roll
His galleons round the little *Golden Hynde*,
Bring her to bay, if he can, on the high seas,
Ring us about with thousands, we'll not yield,
I and my *Golden Hynde*, we will go down,
With flag still flying on the last stump left us
And all my cannon spitting out the fires
Of everlasting scorn into his face."

So Drake warped out the *Golden Hynde* anew
Behind St Nicholas' Island. She lay there,
The small grey-golden centre of the world
That raged all round her, the last hope, the star
Of Protestant freedom, she, the outlawed ship
Holding within her the great head and heart
Of England's ocean power; and all the fleets
That have enfranchised earth, in that small ship,
Lay waiting for their doom.
Past her at night
Fisher-boats glided, wondering as they heard
In the thick darkness the great songs they deemed
Must oft have risen from many a lonely sea;
For oft had Spaniards brought a rumour back
Of that strange pirate who in royal state
Sailed to a sound of violins, and dined
With skilled musicians round him, turning all
Battle and storm and death into a song.

Song.

The same Sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other
Wherever we be;
With the same hope before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Ringed round with the sea.

No land in the ring of it
Now, all around us
Only the splendid
Re-surging unknown;
How should we sing of it,
This that hath found us
By the great stars attended
At midnight, alone?

Our highway none knoweth,
Yet our blood hath discerned it!
Clear, clear is our path now
Whose foreheads are free
Where the hurricane bloweth
Our spirits have learned it,
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,
The storm's way, the sea.

When the waters lay breathless
Gazing at Hesper
Guarding that glorious
Fruitage of gold,
Heard we the deathless
Wonderful whisper
We follow, victorious
To-night, as of old.

Ah, the broad miles of it
White with the onset
Of waves without number
Warring for glee;
Ah, the soft smiles of it
Down to the sunset,
Sacred for slumber
The swan's bath, the sea!

When the breakers charged thundering
In thousands all round us
With a lightning of lances
Up-hurtled on high,
When the stout ships were sundering
A rapture hath crowned us
Like the wild light that dances
On the crests that flash by.

Our highway none knoweth,
Yet our blood hath discerned it!
Clear, clear is our path now
Whose foreheads are free,
Where Euroclydon bloweth
Our spirits have learned it,
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,
The storm's way, the sea!

Who now will follow us
Where England's flag leadeth us,
Where gold not inveigles,
Nor statesmen betray?
Tho' the deep midnight swallow us
Let her cry when she needeth us,
We return, her sea-eagles,
The hurricane's way.

For the same Sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other
Wherever we be;
With the same hope before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Ringed round with the sea.

So six days passed, and on the seventh returned
The courier, with a message from the Queen
Summoning Drake to court, bidding him bring
Also such curious trifles of his voyage
As might amuse her, also be of good cheer
She bade him, and rest well content his life
In Gloriana's hands were safe: so Drake
Laughingly landed with his war-bronzed crew
Amid the wide-eyed throng on Plymouth beach
And loaded twelve big pack-horses with pearls
Beyond all price, diamonds, crosses of gold,
Rubies that smouldered once for Aztec kings,
And great dead Incas' gem-encrusted crowns.
Also, he said, we'll add a sack or twain
Of gold doubloons, pieces of eight, moidores,
And such-like Spanish trash, for those poor lords
At court, lilies that toil not neither spin,
Wherefore, methinks their purses oft grow lean
In these harsh times. 'Twere even as well their tongues
Wagged in our favour, now, as in our blame.

. . . . . .

Six days thereafter a fearful whisper reached
Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain
In London, that the pirate Drake was now
In secret conference with the Queen, nay more,
That he, the Master-thief of the golden world,
Drake, even he, that bloody buccaneer,
Had six hours' audience with her Majesty
Daily, nay more, walked with her in her garden

Alone, among the fiery Autumn leaves,
Talking of God knows what, and suddenly
The temporizing diplomatic voice
Of caution he was wont to expect from England
And blandly accept as his imperial due
Changed to a ringing key of firm resolve,
Resistance, nay, defiance. For when he came
Demanding audience of the Queen, behold,
Her officers of state with mouths awry
Informed the high ambassador of Spain,
Despite his pomp and circumstance, the Queen
Could not receive him, being in conference
With some rough seaman, pirate, what you will,
A fellow made of bronze, a buccaneer,
Maned like a lion, bearded like a pard,
With hammered head, clamped jaws, and great deep eyes
That burned with fierce blue colours of the brine,
And liked not Spain—Drake! 'Twas the very name,
One Francis Drake! a Titan that had stood,
Thundering commands against the thundering heavens,
On lightning-shattered, storm-swept decks and drunk
Great draughts of glory from the rolling sea,
El Draque! El Draque! Nor could she promise aught
To Spain's ambassador, nor see his face
Again, while yet one Spanish musketeer
Remained in Ireland.

Vainly the Spaniard raged
Of restitution, recompense; for now
Had Drake brought up the little *Golden Hynde*
To London, and the rumour of her wealth
Out-topped the wild reality. The crew
Were princes as they swaggered down the streets
In weather-beaten splendour. Out of their doors
To wonder and stare the jostling citizens ran
When They went by; and through the length and breadth
Of England, now, the gathering glory of life
Shone like the dawn. O'er hill and dale it streamed,
Dawn, everlasting and almighty dawn,

Making a golden pomp of every oak—
Had not its British brethren swept the seas?—
In each remotest hamlet, by the hearth,
The cart, the grey church-porch, the village pump
By meadow and mill and old manorial hall,
By turnpike and by tavern, farm and forge,
Men staved the crimson vintage of romance
And held it up against the light and drank it,
And with it drank confusion to the wrath
That menaced England, but eternal honour,
While blood ran in their veins, to Francis Drake.

BOOK VIII.

MEANWHILE, young Bess of Sydenham, the queen
Of Drake's deep heart, emprisoned in her home,
Fenced by her father's angry watch and ward
Lest he—the poor plebeian dread of Spain,
Shaker of nations, king of the untamed seas—
Might win some word with her, sweet Bess, the flower
Triumphant o'er their rusty heraldries,
Waited her lover, as in ancient tales
The pale princess from some grey wizard's tower
Midmost the deep sigh of enchanted woods
Looks for the starry flash of her knight's shield;
Or on the further side o' the magic West
Sees pushing through the ethereal golden gloom
Some blurred black prow, with loaded colours coarse,
Clouded with sunsets of a mortal sea,
And rich with earthly crimson. She, with lips
Apart, still waits the shattering golden thrill
When it shall grate the coasts of Fairyland.

Only, to Bess of Sydenham, there came
No sight or sound to break that frozen spell
And lonely watch, no message from her love,
Or none that reached her restless helpless hands.
Only the general rumour of the world
Borne to her by the gossip of her maid
Kept the swift pictures passing through her brain
Of how the *Golden Hynde* was hauled ashore
At Deptford through a sea of exultation,

And by the Queen's command was now set up
For an everlasting memory!
Of how the Queen with subtle statecraft still
Kept Spain at arm's-length, dangling, while she played
At fast and loose with France, whose embassy,
Arriving with the marriage-treaty, found
(And trembled at her daring, since the wrath
Of Spain seemed, in their eyes, to flake with foam
The storm-beat hulk) a gorgeous banquet spread
To greet them on that very *Golden Hynde*
Which sacked the Spanish main, a gorgeous feast,
The like of which old England had not seen
Since the bluff days of boisterous King Hal,
Great shields of brawn with mustard, roasted swans,
Haunches of venison, roasted chines of beef,
And chewets baked, big olive-pyes thereto,
And sallets mixed with sugar and cinnamon,
White wine, rose-water, and candied eringoes.
There, on the outlawed ship, whose very name
Rang like a blasphemy in the imperial ears
Of Spain (its every old worm-eaten plank
Being scored with scorn and courage that not storm
Nor death, nor all their Inquisition racks,
The white-hot irons and bloody branding whips
That scarred the backs of Rome's pale galley-slaves,
Her captured English seamen, ever could daunt),
There with huge Empires waiting for one word,
One breath of colour and excuse, to leap
Like wolves at the naked throat of her small isle,
There in the eyes of the staggered world she stood,
Great Gloriana, while the live decks reeled
With flash of jewels and flush of rustling silks,
She stood with Drake, the corsair, and her people
Surged like a sea around. There did she give
Open defiance with her agate smile
To Spain. "Behold this pirate, now," she cried,
"Whose head my Lord, the Invincible, Philip of Spain
Demands from England. Kneel down, master Drake,

Kneel down; for now have I this gilded sword
Wherewith to strike it off. Nay, thou my lord
Ambassador of France, since I be woman,
And squeamish at the sight of blood, give thou
The accolade. With that jest she gave the hilt
(Thus, even in boldness, playing a crafty part,
And dangling France before the adventurous deed)
To Marchaumont; and in the face of Europe,
With that huge fleet in Cadiz and the whole
World-power of Spain crouching around her isle,
Knighted the master-thief of the unknown world,
Sir Francis Drake.

And then the rumour came
Of vaster privateerings planned by Drake
Against the coasts of Philip; but held in check
And fretting at the leash, as ever the Queen
Clung to her state-craft, while Drake's enemies
Worked in the dark against him. Spain had set
An emperor's ransom on his life. At home
John Doughty, treacherous brother of that traitor
Who met his doom by Drake's own hand, intrigued
With Spain abroad and Spain's dark emissaries
At home to avenge his brother. Burleigh still
Beset Drake's path with pitfalls: treacherous greed
For Spain's blood-money daggered all the dark
Around him, and John Doughty without cease
Sought to make use of all; until, by chance,
Drake gat the proof of treasonable intrigue
With Spain, against him, up to the deadly hilt,
And hurled him into the Tower.

Many a night
She sat by that old casement nigh the sea
And heard its ebb and flow. With soul erect
And splendid now she waited, yet there came
No message; and, she thought, he hath seen at last
My little worth. And when her maiden sang,
With white throat throbbing softly in the dusk
And fingers gently straying o'er the lute,

As was her wont at twilight, some old song
Of high disdainful queens and lovers pale
Pining a thousand years before their feet,
She thought, "O, if my lover loved me yet
My heart would break for joy to welcome him:
Perchance his true pride will not let him come
Since false pride barred him out"; and yet again
She burned with shame, thinking, "to him such pride
Were matter for a jest. Ah no, he hath seen
My little worth." Even so, one night she sat,
One dark rich summer night, thinking him far
Away, wrapped in the multitudinous cares
Of one that seemed the steersman of the State
Now, thro' the storm of Europe; while her maid
Sang to the lute, and soft sea-breezes brought
Wreathed scents and sighs of secret waves and flowers
Warm through the casement's muffling jasmine bloom.

Song.

I.

Nymphs and naiads, come away,
Love lies dead!
Cover the cast-back golden head,
Cover the lovely limbs with may,
And with fairest boughs of green,
And many a rose-wreathed briar spray;
But let no hateful yew be seen
Where Love lies dead.

II.

Let not the queen that would not hear,
(*Love lies dead!*)
Or beauty that refused to save,
Exult in one dejected tear;

But gather the glory of the year,
The pomp and glory of the year,
The triumphing glory of the year,
And softly, softly, softly shed
Its light and fragrance round the grave
Where Love lies dead.

The song ceased. Far away the great sea slept,
And all was very still. Only hard by
One bird-throat poured its passion through the gloom,
And the whole night seemed breathlessly listening,
As though earth's fairies, at the moon's command,
Had muffled all the flower-bells in the world
That God might hear His nightingale.
A twig
Snapped, the song ceased, the intense dumb night was all
One passion of expectation—as if that song
Were prelude, and ere long the heavens and earth
Would burst into one great triumphant psalm.
The song ceased only as if that small bird-throat
Availed no further. Would the next great chord
Ring out from harps in flaming seraph hands
Ranged through the sky? The night watched, breathless,
dumb.
Bess listened. Once again a dry twig snapped
Beneath her casement, and a face looked up,
Draining her face of blood, of sight, of life,
Whispering, a voice from far beyond the stars,
Whispering, unutterable joy, the whole
Glory of life and death in one small word—
Sweetheart!
The jasmine at her casement shook,
She knew no more than he was at her side,
His arms were round her, and his breath beat warm
Against her cheek.

. . . . . .

Suddenly, nigh the house,
A deep-mouthed mastiff bayed and a foot crunched

The gravel. "Ah, hark! they are watching for thee" she
cried.
He laughed: there's half of Europe on the watch
Outside for my poor head. 'Tis cosier here
With thee; but now"—his face grew grave, he drew
A silken ladder from out his doublet—"quick,
Before yon good gamekeeper rounds the house
We must be down." And ere the words were out
Bess reached the path, and Drake was at her side.
Then into the star-stabbed shadow of the woods
They sped, his arm around her. Suddenly
She drew back with a cry, as four grim faces,
With hand to forelock, glimmered in their way.
Laughing she saw their storm-beat friendly smile
Welcome their doughty captain in this new
Adventure. Far away, once more they heard
The mastiff bay; then nearer, as if his nose
Were down upon the trail; and then a cry
As of a hot pursuit. They reached the brook,
Hurrying to the deep. Drake lifted Bess
In his arms, and down the watery bed they splashed
To baffle the clamouring hunt. Then out of the woods
They came, on the seaward side, and Bess, with a shiver
Saw starlight flashing from bare cutlasses,
As the mastiff bayed still nearer. Swiftlier now
They passed along the bare blunt cliffs and saw
The furrow ploughed by that strange cannon-shot
Which saved this hour for Bess; down to the beach
And starry foam that churned the silver gravel
Around an old black lurching boat, a strange
Grim Charon's wherry for two lovers' flight,
Guarded by old Tom Moone. Drake took her hand,
And with one arm around her waist, her breath
Warm on his cheek for a moment, in she stepped
Daintily o'er the gunwale, and took her seat,
His throned princess, beside him at the helm,
Backed by the glittering waves, his throned princess,

With jewelled throat and glorious hair that seemed
Flashing back scents and colours to a sea
Which lived but to reflect her loveliness.

Then, all together, with their brandished oars
The seamen thrust as a heavy mounded wave
Lifted the boat; and up the flowering breast
Of the next they soared, then settled at the thwarts,
And the fierce water boiled before their blades
While with Drake's iron hand upon the helm
They plunged and ploughed across the starlit seas
To where a small black lugger at anchor swung,
Dipping her rakish bows i' the liquid moon.
Small was she, but not fangless; for Bess saw,
With half a tremor, the dumb protective grin
Of four grim guns above the tossing boat.
But ere his seamen or his sweetheart knew
What power, as of a wind, bore them along,
Anchor was up, the sails were broken out,
And as they scudded down the dim grey coast
Of a new enchanted world (for now had Love
Made all things new and strange) the skilled musicians
Upraised, at Drake's command, a song to cheer
Their midnight path across that faery sea.

Song.

I.

Sweet, what is love? 'Tis not the crown of kings,
Nay, nor the fire of white seraphic wings!
Is it a child's heart leaping while he sings?
Even so say I;
Even so say I.

II.

Love like a child around our world doth run,
Happy, happy, happy for all that God hath done,
Glad of all the little leaves dancing in the sun,
Even so say I;
Even so say I.

III.

Sweet, what is love? 'Tis not the burning bliss
Angels know in heaven! God blows the world a kiss
Wakes on earth a wild-rose! Ah, who knows not this?
Even so say I;
Even so say I.

IV.

Love, love is kind! Can it be far away,
Lost in a light that blinds our little day?
Seems it a great thing? Sweetheart, answer nay;
Even so say I;
Even so say I.

V.

Sweet, what is love? The dust beneath our feet,
Whence breaks the rose and all the flowers that greet
April and May with lips and heart so sweet;
Even so say I;
Even so say I.

VI.

Love is the dust whence Eden grew so fair,
Dust of the dust that set my lover there,
Ay, and wrought the gloriole of Eve's gold hair,
Even so say I;
Even so say I.

VII.

Also the springing spray, the little topmost flower
Swung by the bird that sings a little hour,
Earth's climbing spray into the heaven's blue bower,
Even so say I;
Even so say I.

And stranger, ever stranger, grew the night
Around those twain, for whom the fleecy moon
Was but a mightier Cleopatra's pearl
Dissolving in the rich dark wine of night,
While 'mid the tenderer talk of eyes and hands
And whispered nothings, his imperial dreams
Rolled round their gloomy barge, robing its hulk
With splendours Rome and Egypt never knew.
Old ocean was his Nile, his mighty queen
An English maiden purer than the dawn,
His cause the cause of Freedom, his reward
The glory of England. Strangely simple, then,
Simple as life and death, anguish and love,
To Bess appeared those mighty dawning dreams,
Whereby he shaped the pageant of the world
To a new purpose, strangely simple all
Those great new waking tides i' the world's great soul
That set towards the fall of tyranny
Behind a thunderous roar of ocean triumph
O'er burning ships and shattered fleets, while England
Grasped with sure hands the sceptre of the sea,
That untamed realm of Liberty which none
Had looked upon as aught but wilderness
Ere this, or even dreamed of as the seat
Of power and judgment and high sovereignty
Whereby all nations at the last should make
One brotherhood, and war should be no more.
And ever, as the vision broadened out,
The sense of some tremendous change at hand,
The approach of vast Armadas and the dawn

Of battle, reddening the diviner dawn
With clouds, confused it, till once more the song
Rang out triumphant o'er the glittering sea.

Song.

I

Ye that follow the vision
Of the world's weal afar,
Have ye met with derision
And the red laugh of war;
Yet the thunder shall not hurt you,
Nor the battle-storms dismay;
Tho' the sun in heaven desert you,
"Love will find out the way."

II.

When the pulse of hope falters,
When the fire flickers low
On your faith's crumbling altars,
And the faithless gods go;
When the fond hope ye cherished
Cometh, kissing, to betray;
When the last star hath perished,
"Love will find out the way."

III.

When the last dream bereaveth you,
And the heart turns to stone,
When the last comrade leaveth you
In the desert, alone;
With the whole world before you
Clad in battle-array,
And the starless night o'er you,
"Love will find out the way."

IV.

Your dreamers may dream it
The shadow of a dream,
Your sages may deem it
A bubble on the stream;
Yet our kingdom draweth nigher
With each dawn and every day,
Through the earthquake and the fire
"Love will find out the way."

V.

Love will find it, tho' the nations
Rise up blind, as of old,
And the new generations
Wage their warfares of gold;
Tho' they trample child and mother
As red clay into the clay,
Where brother wars with brother,
"Love will find out the way."

Dawn, ever bearing some divine increase
Of beauty, love, and wisdom round the world,
Dawn, like a wild-rose in the fields of heaven
Washed grey with dew, awoke, and found the barque
At anchor in a little land-locked bay.
A crisp breeze blew, and all the living sea
Beneath the flower-soft colours of the sky,
Now like a myriad-petalled rose and now
Innumerably scalloped into shells
Of rosy fire, with dwindling wrinkles edged
Fainter and fainter to the unruffled glow
And soft white pallor of the distant deep,
Shone with a mystic beauty for those twain
Who watched the gathering glory; and, in an hour,
Drake and sweet Bess, attended by a guard

Of four swart seamen, with bare cutlasses,
And by the faithful eyes of old Tom Moone,
Went up the rough rock-steps and twisted street
O' the small white sparkling seaport, tow'rds the church
Where, hand in hand, before God's altar they,
With steadfast eyes, did plight eternal troth,
And so were wedded. Never a chime of bells
Had they; but as they passed from out the porch
Between the sleeping graves, a skylark soared
Above the world in an ecstasy of song,
And quivering heavenwards, lost himself in light.

BOOK IX.

Now like a white-cliffed fortress England shone
Amid the mirk of chaos; for the huge
Empire of Spain was but the dusky van
Of that dread night beyond all nights and days,
Night of the last corruption of a world
Fast-bound in misery and iron, with chains
Of priest and king and feudal servitude,
Night of the fettered flesh and ravaged soul,
Night of anarchic chaos, darkening the deep,
Swallowing up cities, kingdoms, empires, gods,
With vaster gloom approaching, till the sun
Of love was blackened, the moon of faith was blood.
All round our England, our small struggling star,
Fortress of freedom, rock o' the world's desire,
Bearing at last the hope of all mankind,
The thickening darkness surged, and close at hand
Those first fierce cloudy fringes of the storm,
The Armada sails, gathered their might; and Spain
Crouched close behind them with her screaming fires
And steaming shambles, Spain, the hell-hag, crouched,
Still grasping with red hand the cross of Christ
By its great hilt, pointing it like a dagger,
Spear-head of the ultimate darkness, at the throat
Of England. Under Philip's feet at last
Writhed all the Protestant Netherlands, dim coasts
Right over against us, whence his panoplies
Might suddenly whelm our isle. But all night long,
On many a mountain, many a guardian height,

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From Beachy Head to Skiddaw, little groups
Of seamen, torch and battle-lanthorn nigh,
Watched by the brooding unlit beacons, piled
Of furze and gorse, funereal peat, rough logs,
Reeking with oil, 'mid sharp scents of the sea,
Waste trampled grass and heather and close-cropped thyme,
High o'er the thundering coast, among whose rocks
Far, far below, the pacing coastguards gazed
Steadfastly seaward through the loaded dusk.
And through that deepening gloom when, as it seemed,
All England held her breath in one grim doubt,
Swift rumours flashed from North to South as runs
The lightning round a silent thunder-cloud;
And there were muttering crowds i' the London streets,
And hurrying feet i' the brooding Eastern ports.
All night, dark inns, gathering the country-side,
Reddened with clashing auguries of war.
All night, i' the ships of Plymouth Sound, the soul
Of Francis Drake was England, and all night
Her singing seamen by the silver quays
Polished their guns and waited for the dawn.

But hour by hour that night grew deeper. Spain
Watched, cloud by cloud, her huge Armadas grow,
Watched, tower by tower, and zone by zone, her fleets
Grapple the sky with a hundred hands and drag
Whole sea-horizons into her menacing ranks,
Joining her powers to the fierce night, while Philip
Still strove, with many a crafty word, to lull
The fears of Gloriana, till his plots
Were ripe, his armaments complete; and still
Great Gloriana took her woman's way,
Preferring ever tortuous intrigue
To battle, since the stakes had grown so great;
Now, more than ever, hoping against hope
To find some subtler means of victory;
Yet not without swift impulses to strike,
Swiftly recalled. Blind, yet not blind, she smiled

On Mary of Scotland waiting for her throne,
A throne with many a strange dark tremor thrilled
Now as the rumoured murderous mines below
Converged towards it, mine and countermine,
Till the live earth was honeycombed with death.
Still with her agate smile, still she delayed,
Holding her pirate admiral in the leash,
Till Walsingham, nay, even the hunchback Burleigh,
That crafty king of statesmen, seeing at last
The inevitable thunder-crash at hand,
Grew heart-sick with delay and ached to shatter
The tense tremendous hush that seemed to oppress
All hearts, compress all brows, load the broad night
With more than mortal menace.
Only once
The night was traversed with one lightning flash,
One rapier stroke from England, at the heart
Of Spain, as swiftly parried, yet no less
A fiery challenge; for Philip's hate and scorn
Growing with his Armada's growth, he lured
With promises of just and friendly trade
A fleet of English corn-ships to relieve
His famine-stricken coast. There as they lay
Within his ports he seized them, one and all,
To fill the Armada's maw.
Whereat the Queen,
Passive so long, summoned great Walsingham,
And, still averse from open war, despite
The battle-hunger burning in his eyes,
With one strange swift sharp agate smile she hissed,
"Unchain *El Draque!*"
A lightning flash indeed
Was this; for he whose little *Golden Hynde*
With scarce a score of seamen late had scourged
The Spanish Main; he whose piratic neck
Scarcely the Queen's most wily statecraft saved
From Spain's revenge: he, privateer to the eyes
Of Spain, but England to all English hearts,

Gathered together, in all good jollity,
All help and furtherance himself could wish,
Before that moon was out, a pirate fleet
Whereof the like old ocean had not seen—
Eighteen swift cruisers, two great battleships,
With pinnaces and store-ships and a force
Of nigh three thousand men, wherewith to singe
The beard o' the King of Spain.

By night they gathered
In marvellous wind-whipt inns nigh Plymouth Sound,
Not secretly as, ere the *Golden Hynde*
Burst thro' the West, that small adventurous crew
Gathered beside the Thames, tossing the phrase
"Pieces of eight" from mouth to mouth, and singing
Great songs of the rich Indies, and those tall
Enchanted galleons, red with blood and gold,
Superb with rubies, glorious as clouds,
Clouds i' the sun, with mighty press of sail
Dragging the sunset out of the unknown world,
And staining all the grey old seas of Time
With rich romance; but these, though privateers,
Or secret knights on Gloriana's quest,
Recked not if round the glowing magic door
Of every inn the townsfolk grouped to hear
The storm-scarred seamen toasting Francis Drake,
Nor heeded what blithe urchin faces pressed
On each red-curtained magic casement, bright
With wild reflection of the fires within,
The fires, the glasses, and the singing lips
Lifting defiance to the powers of Spain.

Song.

Sing we the Rose,
The flower of flowers most glorious!
Never a storm that blows
Across our English sea,

But its heart breaks out wi' the Rose
On England's flag victorious,
The triumphing flag that flows
Thro' the heavens of Liberty.

Sing we the Rose,
The flower of flowers most beautiful!
Until the world shall end
She blossometh year by year,
Red with the blood that flows
For England's sake, most dutiful,
Wherefore now we bend
Our hearts and knees to her.

Sing we the Rose,
The flower, the flower of war it is,
Where deep i' the midnight gloom
Its waves are the waves of the sea,
And the glare of battle grows,
And red over hulk and spar it is,
Till the grim black broadsides bloom
With our Rose of Victory.

Sing we the Rose,
The flower, the flower of love it is,
Which lovers aye shall sing
And nightingales proclaim;
For O, the heaven that glows,
That glows and burns above it is
Freedom's perpetual Spring,
Our England's faithful fame.

Sing we the Rose,
That Eastward still shall spread for us
Upon the dawn's bright breast,
Red leaves wi' the foam impearled;

And onward ever flows
Till eventide make red for us
A Rose that sinks i' the West
And surges round the world;
Sing we the Rose!

One night as, with his great vice-admiral,
Frobisher, his rear-admiral, Francis Knollys,
And Thomas Fenner, his flag-captain, Drake
Took counsel at his tavern, there came a knock,
The door opened, and cold as from the sea
The gloom rushed in, and there against the night,
Clad as it seemed with wind and cloud and rain,
Glittered a courtier whom by face and form
All knew for the age's brilliant paladin,
Sidney, the king of courtesy, a star
Of chivalry. The seamen stared at him,
Each with a hand upon the red-lined chart
Outspread before them. Then all stared at Drake,
Who crouched like a great bloodhound o'er the table,
And rose with a strange light burning in his eyes;
For he remembered how, three years agone,
That other courtier came, with words and smiles
Copied from Sidney's self; and in his ears
Rang once again the sound of the two-edged sword
Upon the desolate Patagonian shore
Beneath Magellan's gallows. With a voice
So harsh himself scarce knew it, he desired
This fair new courtier's errand. With grim eyes
He scanned the silken knight from head to foot,
While Sidney, smiling graciously, besought
Some place in their adventure. Drake's clenched fist
Crashed down on the old oak table like a rock,
Splintering the wood and dashing his rough wrist
With blood, as he thundered, "By the living God,
No! We've no room for courtiers, now! We leave
All that to Spain."

Whereat, seeing Sidney stood

Amazed, Drake, drawing nearer, said, "You ask
More than you dream: I know you for a knight
Most perfect and most gentle, yea, a man
Ready to die on any battle-field
To save a wounded friend" (even so said Drake,
Not knowing how indeed this knight would die,
Yea, yield the cup of water from his lips
To save a wounded soldier, saying, "His need
Is greater!")
Drake outstretched his bleeding hand
And pointed through the door to where the gloom
Glimmered with bursting spray, and the thick night
Was all one wandering thunder of hidden seas
Rolling out of Eternity: "You'll find
No purple fields of Arcady out there,
No shepherds piping in those boisterous valleys,
No sheep among those roaring mountain-tops,
No lists of feudal chivalry. I've heard
That voice cry death to courtiers. 'Tis God's voice.
Take you the word of one who has occupied
His business in great waters. There's no room,
Meaning, or reason, office, or place, or name
For courtiers on the sea. Does the sea flatter?
You cannot bribe it, torture it, or tame it!
Its laws are those of the Juggernaut universe,
Remorseless—listen to that!"—a mighty wave
Broke thundering down the coast; "your hands are white,
Your rapier jewelled, can you grapple that?
What part have you in all its flaming ways?
What share in its fierce gloom? Has your heart broken
As those waves break out there? Can you lie down
And sleep, as a lion-cub by the old lion,
When it shakes its mane out over you to hide you,
And leap out with the dawn as I have done?
These are big words; but, see, my hand is red:
You cannot torture me, I have borne all that;
And so I have some kinship with the sea,
Some sort of wild alliance with its storms,

Its exultations, ay, and its great wrath
At last, and power upon them. 'Tis the worse
For Spain. Be counselled well: come not between
My sea and its rich vengeance."
Silently,
Bowing his head, Sidney withdrew. But Drake,
So fiercely the old grief rankled in his heart,
Summoned his swiftest horseman, bidding him ride,
Ride like the wind through the night, straight to the Queen,
Praying she would most instantly recall
Her truant courtier. Nay, to make all sure,
Drake sent a gang of seamen out to crouch
Ambushed in woody hollows nigh the road,
Under the sailing moon, there to waylay
The Queen's reply, that she might never know
It reached him, if it proved against his will.

And swiftly came that truant's stern recall;
But Drake, in hourly dread of some new change
In Gloriana's mood, slept not by night
Or day, till out of roaring Plymouth Sound
The pirate fleet swept to the wind-swept main,
And took the wind and shook out all its sails.
Then with the unfettered sea he mixed his soul
In great rejoicing union, while the ships
Crashing and soaring o'er the heart-free waves
Drave ever straight for Spain.
Water and food
They lacked; but the fierce fever of his mind
To sail from Plymouth ere the Queen's will changed
Had left no time for these. Right on he drave,
Determining, though the Queen's old officers
Beneath him stood appalled, to take in stores
Of all he needed, water, powder, food,
By plunder of Spain herself. In Vigo bay,
Close to Bayona town, under the cliffs
Of Spain's world-wide and thunder-fraught prestige
He anchored, with the old sea-touch that wakes

Our England still. There, in the tingling ears
Of the world he cried, *En garde!* to the King of Spain.
There, ordering out his pinnaces in force,
While a great storm, as if he held indeed
Heaven's batteries in reserve, growled o'er the sea,
He landed. Ere one cumbrous limb of all
The monstrous armaments of Spain could move
His ships were stored; and ere the sword of Spain
Stirred in its crusted sheath, Bayona town
Beheld an empty sea; for like a dream
The pirate fleet had vanished, none knew whither.
But, in its visible stead, invisible fear
Filled the vast rondure of the sea and sky
As with the omnipresent soul of Drake.
For when Spain saw the small black anchored fleet
Ride in her bays, the sight set bounds to fear.
She knew at least the ships were oak, the guns
Of common range: nor did she dream e'en Drake
Could sail two seas at once. Now all her coasts
Heard him all night in every bursting wave,
His topsails gleamed in every moonlit cloud;
His battle-lanthorn glittered in the stars
That hung the low horizon. He became
A universal menace; yet there followed
No sight or sound of him, unless the sea
Were that grim soul incarnate. Did it not roar
His great commands? The very spray that lashed
The cheeks of Spanish seamen lashed their hearts
To helpless hatred of him. The wind sang
El Draque across the rattling blocks and sheets
When storms perplexed them; and when ships went down,
As under the fury of his onsetting battle,
The drowning sailors cursed him while they sank.

Suddenly a rumour shook the Spanish Court,
He has gone once more to the Indies. Santa Cruz,
High Admiral of Spain, the most renowned
Captain in Europe, clamoured for a fleet

Of forty sail instantly to pursue.
For unto him whose little *Golden Hynde*
Was weapon enough, now leading such a squadron,
The West Indies, the whole Pacific coast,
And the whole Spanish Main, lay at his mercy.

And onward over the great grey gleaming sea
Swept like a thunder-cloud the pirate fleet
With vengeance in its heart. Five years agone,
Young Hawkins, in the Cape Verde Islands, met—
At Santiago—with such treachery
As Drake burned to requite, and from that hour
Was Santiago doomed. His chance had come,
Drake swooped upon it, plundered it, and was gone,
Leaving the treacherous isle a desolate heap
Of smoking ashes in the leaden sea,
While onward all those pirate bowsprits plunged
Into the golden West, across the broad
Atlantic once again; "For I will show,"
Said Drake, "that Englishmen henceforth will sail
Old ocean where they will." Onward they surged,
And the great glittering crested majestic waves
Jubilantly rushed up to meet the keels,
And there was nought around them but the grey
Ruin and roar of the huge Atlantic seas,
Grey mounded seas, pursuing and pursued,
That fly, hounded and hounding on for ever,
From empty marge to marge of the grey sky.
Over the wandering wilderness of foam,
Onward, through storm and death, Drake swept; for now
Once more a fell plague gripped the tossing ships,
And not by twos and threes as heretofore
His crews were minished; but in three black days
Three hundred seamen in their shotted shrouds
Were cast into the deep. Onward he swept,
Implacably, having in mind to strike
Spain in the throat at St Domingo, port
Of Hispaniola, a city of far renown,

A jewel on the shores of old romance,
Palm-shadowed, gated with immortal gold,
Queen city of Spain's dominions over sea,
And guarded by great guns. Out of the dawn
The pirate ships came leaping, grim and black,
And ere the Spaniards were awake, the flag
Of England floated from their topmost tower.
But since he had not troops enough to hold
So great a city, Drake entrenched his men
Within the Plaza and held the batteries.
Thence he demanded ransom, and sent out
A boy with flag of truce. The boy's return
Drake waited long. Under a sheltering palm
He stood, watching the enemies' camp, and lo,
Along the hot white purple-shadowed road
Tow'rds him, a crawling shape writhed through the dust
Up to his feet, a shape besmeared with blood,
A shape that held the stumps up of its wrists
And moaned, an eyeless thing, a naked rag
Of flesh obscenely mangled, a small face
Hideously puckered, shrivelled like a monkey's,
With lips drawn backward from its teeth.
"Speak, speak,
In God's name, speak, what art thou?" whispered Drake,
And a sharp cry came, answering his dread,
A cry as of a sea-bird in the wind
Desolately astray from all earth's shores,
"Captain, I am thy boy, only thy boy!
See, see, my captain, see what they have done!
Captain, I only bore the flag; I only——"

"O, lad, lad, lad," moaned Drake, and, stooping, strove
To pillow the mangled head upon his arm.
"What have they done to thee, what have they done?"
And at the touch the boy screamed, once, and died.

Then like a savage sea with arms uplift
To heaven the wrath of Drake blazed thundering,

"Eternal God, be this the doom of Spain!
Henceforward have no pity. Send the strength
Of Thy great seas into my soul that I
May devastate this empire, this red hell
They make of Thy good earth."
His men drew round,
Staring in horror at the silent shape
That daubed his feet. Like a cold wind
His words went through their flesh:
"This is the lad
That bore our flag of truce. This hath Spain done.
Look well upon it, draw the smoke of the blood
Up into your nostrils, my companions,
And down into your souls. This makes an end
For Spain! Bring forth the Spanish prisoners
And let me look on them."
Forth they were brought,
A swarthy gorgeous band of soldiers, priests,
And sailors, hedged between two sturdy files
Of British tars with naked cutlasses.
Close up to Drake they halted, under the palm,
Gay smiling prisoners, for they thought their friends
Had ransomed them. Then they looked up and met
A glance that swept athwart them like a sword,
Making the blood strain back from their blanched faces
Into their quivering hearts, with unknown dread,
As that accuser pointed to the shape
Before his feet.
"Dogs, will ye lap his blood
Before ye die? Make haste; for it grows cold!
Ye will not, will not even dabble your hands
In that red puddle of flesh, what? Are ye Spaniards?
Come, come, I'll look at you, perchance there's one
That's but a demi-devil and holds you back."
And with the word Drake stepped among their ranks
And read each face among the swarthy crew—
The gorgeous soldiers, ringleted sailors, priests
With rosary and cross, a slender page

In scarlet with a cloud of golden hair,
And two rope-girdled friars.
The slim page
Drake drew before the throng. "You are young," he said,
"Go; take this message to the camp of Spain,
Tell them I have a hunger in my soul
To look upon the murderers of this boy,
To see what eyes they have, what manner of mouths,
To touch them and to take their hands in mine,
And draw them close to me and smile upon them
Until they know my soul as I know theirs,
And they grovel in the dust and grope for mercy.
Say that, until I get them, every day
I'll hang two Spaniards though I dispeople
The Spanish Main. Tell them that, every day,
I'll burn a portion of their city down,
Then find another city and burn that,
And then burn others till I burn away
Their empire from the world, ay, till I reach
The imperial throne of Philip with my fires,
And send it shrieking down to burn in hell
For ever. Go!"
Then Drake turned once again
To face the Spanish prisoners. With a voice
Cold as the passionless utterance of Fate
His grim command went forth. "Now, provost-marshal,
Begin with yon two friars, in whose faces
Chined like singed swine, and eyed with the spent coals
Of filthy living, sweats the glory of Spain.
Strip off their leprous rags
And twist their ropes around their throats and hang them
High over the Spanish camp for all to see.
At dawn I'll choose two more."

BOOK X.

Across the Atlantic
Great rumours rushed as of a mighty wind,
The wind of the spirit of Drake. But who shall tell
In this cold age the power that he became
Who drew the universe within his soul
And moved with cosmic forces? Though the deep
Divided it from Drake, the gorgeous court
Of Philip shuddered away from the streaming coasts
As a wind-cuffed field of golden wheat. The King,
Bidding his guests to a feast in his own ship
On that wind-darkened sea, was made a mock,
As one by one his ladies proffered excuse
For fear of That beyond. Round Europe now
Ballad and story told how in the cabin
Of Francis Drake there hung a magic glass
Wherein he saw the fleets of all his enemies
And all that passed aboard them. Rome herself,
Perplexed that this proud heretic should prevail,
Fostered a darker dream, that Drake had bought,
Like old Norse wizards, power to loose or bind
The winds at will.
And now a wilder tale
Flashed o'er the deep—of a distant blood-red dawn
O'er San Domingo, where the embattled troops
Of Spain and Drake were met—but not in war—
Met in the dawn, by his compelling will,
To offer up a sacrifice. Yea, there
Between the hosts, the hands of Spain herself

Slaughtered the Spanish murderers of the boy
Who had borne Drake's flag of truce; offered them up
As a blood-offering and an expiation
Lest Drake, with that dread alchemy of his soul,
Should e'en transmute the dust beneath their feet
To one same substance with the place of pain
And whelm them suddenly in the eternal fires.
Rumour on rumour rushed across the sea,
Large mockeries, and one most bitter of all,
Wormwood to Philip, of how Drake had stood
I' the governor's house at San Domingo, and seen
A mighty scutcheon of the King of Spain
Whereon was painted the terrestrial globe,
And on the globe a mighty steed in act
To spring into the heavens, and from its mouth
Streaming like smoke a scroll, and on the scroll
Three words of flame and fury—*Non sufficit Orbis*—of how Drake and his seamen stood
Gazing upon it, and could not forbear
From summoning the Spaniards to expound
Its meaning, whereupon a hurricane roar
Of mirth burst from those bearded British lips,
And that immortal laughter shook the world.

So, while the imperial warrior eyes of Spain
Watched, every hour, her vast Armada grow
Readier to launch and shatter with one stroke
Our island's frail defence, fear gripped her still,
For there came sounds across the heaving sea
Of secret springs unsealed, forces unchained,
A mustering of deep elemental powers,
A sound as of the burgeoning of boughs
In universal April and dead hearts
Uprising from their tombs; a mighty cry
Of resurrection, surging through the souls
Of all mankind. For now the last wild tale
Swept like another dawn across the deep;
And, in that dawn, men saw the slaves of Spain,

The mutilated negroes of the mines,
With gaunt backs wealed and branded, scarred and seared
By whip and iron, in Spain's brute lust for gold,
Saw them, at Drake's great liberating word,
Burst from their chains, erect, uplifting hands
Of rapture to the glad new light that then,
Then first, began to struggle thro' the clouds
And crown all manhood with a sacred crown
August—a light which, though from age to age
Clouds may obscure it, grows and still shall grow,
Until that Kingdom come, that grand Communion,
That Commonweal, that Empire, which still draws
Nigher with every hour, that Federation,
That turning of the wasteful strength of war
To accomplish large and fruitful tasks of peace,
That gathering up of one another's loads
Whereby the weak are strengthened and the strong
Made stronger in the increasing good of all.
Then, suddenly, it seemed, as he had gone,
A ship came stealing into Plymouth Sound
And Drake was home again, but not to rest;
For scarce had he cast anchor ere the road
To London rang beneath the flying hoofs
That bore his brief despatch to Burleigh, saying—
"We have missed the Plate Fleet by but twelve hours' sail,
The reason being best known to God. No less
We have given a cooling to the King of Spain.
There is a great gap opened which, methinks,
Is little to his liking. We have sacked
The towns of his chief Indies, burnt their ships,
Captured great store of gold and precious stones,
Three hundred pieces of artillery,
The more part brass. Our loss is heavy indeed,
Under the hand of God, eight hundred men,
Three parts of them by sickness. Captain Moon,
My trusty old companion, he that struck
The first blow in the South Seas at a Spaniard,
Died of a grievous wound at Cartagena.

My fleet and I are ready to strike again
At once, where'er the Queen and England please.
I pray for her commands, and those with speed,
That I may strike again." Outside the scroll
These words were writ once more—"My Queen's commands
I much desire, your servant, Francis Drake."

This terse despatch the hunchback Burleigh read
Thrice over, with the broad cliff of his brow
Bending among his books. Thrice he assayed
To steel himself with caution as of old;
And thrice, as a glorious lightning running along
And flashing between those simple words, he saw
The great new power that lay at England's hand,
An ocean-sovereignty, a power unknown
Before, but dawning now; a power that swept
All earth's old plots and counterplots away
Like straws; the germ of an unmeasured force
New-born, that laid the source of Spanish might
At England's mercy! Could that force but grow
Ere Spain should nip it, ere the mighty host
That waited in the Netherlands even now,
That host of thirty thousand men encamped
Round Antwerp, under Parma, should embark
Convoyed by that Invincible Armada
To leap at England's throat! Thrice he assayed
To think of England's helplessness, her ships
Little and few. Thrice he assayed to quench
With caution the high furnace of his soul
Which Drake had kindled. As he read the last
Rough simple plea, *I wait my Queen's commands*,
His deep eyes flashed with glorious tears.
He leapt
To his feet and cried aloud, "Before my God,
I am proud, I am very proud for England's sake!
This Drake is a terrible man to the King of Spain."

And still, still, Gloriana, brooding darkly

On Mary of Scotland's doom, who now at last
Was plucked from out her bosom like a snake
Hissing of war with France, a queenly snake,
A Lilith in whose lovely gleaming folds
And sexual bonds the judgment of mankind
Writhes even yet half-strangled, meting out
Wild execrations on the maiden Queen
Who quenched those jewelled eyes and mixt with dust
That white and crimson, who with cold sharp steel
In substance and in spirit, severed the neck
And straightened out those glittering supple coils
For ever; though for evermore will men
Lie subject to the unforgotten gleam
Of diamond eyes and cruel crimson mouth,
And curse the sword-bright intellect that struck
Like lightning far through Europe and the world
For England, when amid the embattled fury
Of world-wide empires, England stood alone.
Still she held back from war, still disavowed
The deeds of Drake to Spain; and yet once more
Philip, resolved at last never to swerve
By one digressive stroke, one ell or inch
From his own patient, sure, laborious path,
Accepted her suave plea, and with all speed
Pressed on his huge emprise until it seemed
His coasts groaned with grim bulks of cannonry,
Thick loaded hulks of thunder and towers of doom;
And, all round Antwerp, Parma still prepared
To hurl such armies o'er the rolling sea
As in all history hardly the earth herself
Felt shake with terror her own green hills and plains.
I wait my Queen's commands! Despite the plea
Urged every hour upon her with the fire
That burned for action in the soul of Drake,
Still she delayed, till on one darkling eve
She gave him audience in that glimmering room
Where first he saw her. Strangely sounded there
The seaman's rough strong passion as he poured

His heart before her, pleading—"Every hour
Is one more victory lost," and only heard
The bitter answer—"Nay, but every hour
Is a breath snatched from the unconquerable
Doom, that awaits us if we are forced to war.
Yea, and who knows?—though Spain may forge a sword,
Its point is not inevitably bared
Against the breast of England!" As she spake,
The winds without clamoured with clash of bells,
There was a gleam of torches and a roar—
Mary, the traitress of the North, is dead,
God save the Queen!
Her head bent down: she wept.
"Pity me, friend, though I be queen, O yet
My heart is woman, and I am sore pressed
On every side,—Scotland and France and Spain
Beset me, and I know not where to turn."
Even as she spake, there came a hurried step
Into that dim rich chamber. Walsingham
Stood there, before her, without ceremony
Thrusting a letter forth: "At last," he cried,
"Your Majesty may read the full intent
Of priestly Spain. Here, plainly written out,
Upon this paper, worth your kingdom's crown,
This letter, stolen by a trusty spy,
Out of the inmost chamber of the Pope
Sixtus himself, here is your murder planned:
Blame not your Ministers who with such haste
Plucked out this viper, Mary, from your breast!
Read here—how, with his thirty thousand men,
The pick of Europe, Parma joins the Scots,
While Ireland, grasped in their Armada's clutch,
And the Isle of Wight, against our west and south
Become their base."
"Rome, Rome, and Rome again,
And always Rome," she muttered; "even here
In England hath she thousands yet. She hath struck
Her curse out with pontific finger at me,

Cursed me down and away to the bottomless pit.
Her shadow like the shadow of clouds or sails,
The shadow of that huge event at hand,
Darkens the seas already, and the wind
Is on my cheek that shakes my kingdom down.
She hath thousands here in England, born and bred
Englishmen. They will stand by Rome!"
"'Fore God,"
Cried Walsingham, "my Queen, you do them wrong!
There is another Rome—not this of Spain
Which lurks to pluck the world back into darkness
And stab it there for gold. There is a City
Whose eyes are tow'rd the morning; on whose heights
Blazes the Cross of Christ above the world;
A Rome that shall wage warfare yet for God
In the dark days to come, a Rome whose thought
Shall march with our humanity and be proud
To cast old creeds like seed into the ground,
Watch the strange shoots and foster the new flower
Of faiths we know not yet. Is this a dream?
I speak as one by knighthood bound to speak;
For even this day—and my heart burns with it—
I heard the Catholic gentlemen of England
Speaking in grave assembly. At one breath
Of peril to our island, why, their swords
Leapt from their scabbards, and their cry went up
To split the heavens—*God save our English Queen!*"
Even as he spake there passed the rushing gleam
Of torches once again, and as they stood
Silently listening, all the winds ran wild
With clamouring bells, and a great cry went up—
God save Elizabeth, our English Queen!

"I'll vouch for some two hundred Catholic throats
Among that thousand," whispered Walsingham
Eagerly, with his eyes on the Queen's face.
Then, seeing it brighten, fervently he cried,
Pressing the swift advantage home, "O, Madam,

The heart of England now is all on fire!
We are one people, as we never have been
In all our history, all prepared to die
Around your throne. Madam, you are beloved
As never yet was English king or queen!"
She looked at him, the tears in her keen eyes
Glittered—"And I am very proud," she said,
"But if our enemies command the world,
And we have one small island and no more . . ."
She ceased; and Drake, in a strange voice, hoarse and low,
Trembling with passion deeper than all speech,
Cried out—"No more than the great ocean-sea
Which makes the enemies' coast our frontier now;
No more than that great Empire of the deep
Which rolls from Pole to Pole, washing the world
With thunder, that great Empire whose command
This day is yours to take. Hear me, my Queen,
This is a dream, a new dream, but a true;
For mightier days are dawning on the world
Than heart of man hath known. If England hold
The sea, she holds the hundred thousand gates
That open to futurity. She holds
The highway of all ages. Argosies
Of unknown glory set their sails this day
For England out of ports beyond the stars.
Ay, on the sacred seas we ne'er shall know
They hoist their sails this day by peaceful quays,
Great gleaming wharves i' the perfect City of God,
If she but claim her heritage."
He ceased;
And the deep dream of that new realm, the sea,
Through all the soul of Gloriana surged
A moment, then with splendid eyes that filled
With fire of sunsets far away, she cried
(Faith making her a child, yet queenlier still)
"Yea, claim it thou for me!"
A moment there
Trembling she stood. Then, once again, there passed

A rush of torches through the gloom without,
And a great cry "*God save Elizabeth,*
God save our English Queen!"
"Yea go, then, go,"
She said, "God speed you now, Sir Francis Drake,
Not as a privateer, but with full powers,
My Admiral-at-the-Seas!"
Without a word
Drake bent above her hand and, ere she knew it,
His eyes from the dark doorway flashed farewell
And he was gone. But ere he leapt to saddle
Walsingham stood at his stirrup, muttering "Ride,
Ride now like hell to Plymouth; for the Queen
Is hard beset, and ere ye are out at sea
Her mood will change. The friends of Spain will move
Earth and the heavens for your recall. They'll tempt her
With their false baits of peace, though I shall stand
Here at your back through thick and thin; farewell!"
Fire flashed beneath the hoofs and Drake was gone.

Scarce had he vanished in the night than doubt
Once more assailed the Queen. The death of Mary
Had brought e'en France against her. Walsingham,
And Burleigh himself, prime mover of that death,
Being held in much disfavour for it, stood
As helpless. Long ere Drake or human power,
They thought, could put to sea, a courier sped
To Plymouth bidding Drake forbear to strike
At Spain, but keep to the high seas, and lo,
The roadstead glittered empty. Drake was gone!

Gone! Though the friends of Spain had poured their gold
To thin his ranks, and every hour his crews
Deserted, he had laughed—"Let Spain buy scum!
Next to an honest seaman I love best
An honest landsman. What more goodly task
Than teaching brave men seamanship?" He had filled

His ships with soldiers! Out in the teeth of the gale
That raged against him he had driven. In vain,
Amid the boisterous laughter of the quays,
A pinnace dashed in hot pursuit and met
A roaring breaker and came hurtling back
With oars and spars all trailing in the foam,
A tangled mass of wreckage and despair.
Sky swept to stormy sky: no sail could live
In that great yeast of waves; but Drake was gone!

Then, once again, across the rolling sea
Great rumours rushed of how he had sacked the port
Of Cadiz and had swept along the coast
To Lisbon, where the whole Armada lay.
Had snapped up prizes under its very nose,
And taunted Santa Cruz, High Admiral
Of Spain, striving to draw him out for fight,
And offering, if his course should lie that way,
To convoy him to Britain, taunted him
So bitterly that for once, in the world's eyes,
A jest had power to kill; for Santa Cruz
Died with the spleen of it, since he could not move
Before the appointed season. Then there came
Flying back home, the Queen's old Admiral
Borough, deserting Drake and all aghast
At Drake's temerity: "For," he said, "this man,
Thrust o'er my head, against all precedent,
Bade me follow him into harbour mouths
A-flame with cannon like the jaws of death,
Whereat I much demurred; and straightway Drake
Clapped me in irons, me—an officer
And Admiral of the Queen; and, though my voice
Was all against it, plunged into the pit
Without me, left me with some word that burns
And rankles in me still, making me fear
The man was mad, some word of lonely seas,
A desert island and a mutineer
And dead Magellan's gallows. Sirs, my life

Was hardly safe with him. Why, he resolved
To storm the Castle of St Vincent, sirs,
A castle on a cliff, grinning with guns,
Well known impregnable! The Spaniards fear
Drake; but to see him land below it and bid
Surrender, sirs, the strongest fort of Spain
Without a blow, they laughed! And straightway he,
With all the fury of Satan, turned that cliff
To hell itself. He sent down to the ships
For faggots, broken oars, beams, bowsprits, masts,
And piled them up against the outer gates,
Higher and higher, and fired them. There he stood
Amid the smoke and flame and cannon-shot,
This Admiral, like a common seaman, black
With soot, besmeared with blood, his naked arms
Full of great faggots, labouring like a giant
And roaring like Apollyon. Sirs, he is mad!
But did he take it, say you? Yea, he took it,
The mightiest stronghold on the coast of Spain,
Took it and tumbled all its big brass guns
Clattering over the cliffs into the sea.
But, sirs, ye need not raise a cheer so loud!
It is not warfare. 'Twas a madman's trick,
A devil's!"

Then the rumour of a storm
That scattered the fleet of Drake to the four winds
Disturbed the heart of England, as his ships
Came straggling into harbour, one by one,
Saying they could not find him. Then, at last,
When the storm burst in its earth-shaking might
Along our coasts, one night of rolling gloom
His cannon woke old Plymouth. In he came
Across the thunder and lightning of the sea
With his grim ship of war and, close behind,
A shadow like a mountain or a cloud
Torn from the heaven-high panoplies of Spain,
A captured galleon loomed, and round her prow
A blazoned scroll, whence (as she neared the quays

Which many a lanthorn swung from brawny fist
Yellowed) the sudden crimson of her name
San Filippe flashed o'er the white sea of faces,
And a rending shout went skyward that outroared
The blanching breakers—"'Tis the heart of Spain!
The great *San Filippe!*" Overhead she towered,
The mightiest ship afloat; and in her hold
The riches of a continent, a prize
Greater than earth had ever known; for there
Not only ruby and pearl like ocean-beaches
Heaped on some wizard coast in that dim hull
Blazed to the lanthorn-light; not only gold
Gleamed, though of gold a million would not buy
Her store; but in her cabin lay the charts
And secrets of the wild unwhispered wealth
Of India, secrets that splashed London wharves
With coloured dreams and made her misty streets
Flame like an Eastern City when the sun
Shatters itself on jewelled domes and spills
Its crimson wreckage thro' the silvery palms.
And of those dreams the far East India quest
Began: the first foundation-stone was laid
Of our great Indian Empire, and a star
Began to tremble on the brows of England
That Time can never darken.

But now the seas
Darkened indeed with menace; now at last
The cold wind of the black approaching wings
Of Azrael crept across the deep: the storm
Throbbed with their thunderous pulse, and ere that moon
Waned, a swift gunboat foamed into the Sound
With word that all the Invincible Armada
Was hoisting sail for England.
Even now,
Elizabeth, torn a thousand ways, withheld
The word for which Drake pleaded as for life,
That he might meet them ere they left their coasts,

Meet them or ever they reached the Channel, meet them
Now, or—"Too late! too late!" At last his voice
Beat down e'en those that blindly dinned her ears
With chatter of meeting Spain on British soil;
And swiftly she commanded (seeing once more
The light that burned amid the approaching gloom
In Drake's deep eyes) Lord Howard of Effingham,
High Admiral of England, straight to join him
At Plymouth Sound. "How many ships are wanted?"
She asked him, thinking "we are few, indeed!"
"Give me but sixteen merchantmen," he said,
"And but four battleships, by the mercy of God,
I'll answer for the Armada!" Out to sea
They swept, in the teeth of a gale; but vainly Drake
Strove to impart the thought wherewith his mind
Travailed—to win command of the ocean-sea
By bursting on the fleets of Spain at once
Even as they left their ports, not as of old
To hover in a vain dream of defence
Round fifty threatened points of British coast,
But Howard, clinging to his old-world order,
Flung out his ships in a loose, long, straggling line
Across the Channel, waiting, wary, alert,
But powerless thus as a string of scattered sea-gulls
Beating against the storm. Then, flying to meet them,
A merchantman brought terror down the wind,
With news that she had seen that monstrous host
Stretching from sky to sky, great hulks of doom,
Dragging death's midnight with them o'er the sea
Tow'rds England. Up to Howard's flag-ship Drake
In his immortal battle-ship—*Revenge*,
Rushed thro' the foam, and thro' the swirling seas
His pinnace dashed alongside. On to the decks
O' the tossing flag-ship, like a very Viking
Shaking the surf and rainbows of the spray
From sun-smit lion-like mane and beard he stood
Before Lord Howard in the escutcheoned poop

And poured his heart out like the rending sea
In passionate wave on wave:
"If yonder fleet
Once reach the Channel, hardly the mercy of God
Saves England! I would pray with my last breath,
Let us beat up to windward of them now,
And handle them before they reach the Channel."
"Nay; but we cannot bare the coast," cried Howard,
"Nor have we stores of powder or food enough!"
"My lord," said Drake, with his great arm outstretched
"There is food enough in yonder enemy's ships,
And powder enough and cannon-shot enough!
We must re-victual there. Look! look!" he cried,
And pointed to the heavens. As for a soul
That by sheer force of will compels the world
To work his bidding, so it seemed the wind
That blew against them slowly veered. The sails
Quivered, the skies revolved. A northerly breeze
Awoke and now, behind the British ships,
Blew steadily tow'rds the unseen host of Spain.
"It is the breath of God," cried Drake, "they lie
Wind-bound, and we may work our will with them.
Signal the word, Lord Howard, and drive down!"
And as a man convinced by heaven itself
Lord Howard ordered, straightway, the whole fleet
To advance.
And now, indeed, as Drake foresaw,
The Armada lay, beyond the dim horizon,
Wind-bound and helpless in Corunna bay,
At England's mercy, could her fleet but draw
Nigh enough, with its fire-ships and great guns
To windward. Nearer, nearer, league by league
The ships of England came; till Ushant lay
Some seventy leagues behind. Then, yet once more
The wind veered, straight against them. To remain
Beating against it idly was to starve:
And, as a man whose power upon the world

Fails for one moment of exhausted will,
Drake, gathering up his forces as he went
For one more supreme effort, turned his ship
Tow'rds Plymouth, and retreated with the rest.

There, while the ships refitted with all haste
And axe and hammer rang, one golden eve
Just as the setting sun began to fringe
The clouds with crimson, and the creaming waves
Were one wild riot of fairy rainbows, Drake
Stood with old comrades on the close-cropped green
Of Plymouth Hoe, playing a game of bowls.
Far off unseen, a little barque, full-sail,
Struggled and leapt and strove tow'rds Plymouth Sound,
Noteless as any speckled herring-gull
Flickering between the white flakes of the waves.
A group of schoolboys with their satchels lay
Stretched on the green, gazing with great wide eyes
Upon their seamen heroes, as like gods
Disporting with the battles of the world
They loomed, tossing black bowls like cannon-balls
Against the rosy West, or lounged at ease
With faces olive-dark against that sky
Laughing, while from the neighbouring inn mine host,
White-aproned and blue-jerkined, hurried out
With foaming cups of sack, and they drank deep,
Tossing their heads back under the golden clouds
And burying their bearded lips. The hues
That slashed their doublets, for the boys' bright eyes
(Even as the gleams of Grecian cloud or moon
Revealed the old gods) were here rich dusky streaks
Of splendour from the Spanish Main, that shone
But to proclaim these heroes. There a boy
More bold crept nearer to a slouched hat thrown
Upon the green, and touched the silver plume,
And felt as if he had touched a sunset-isle
Of feathery palms beyond a crimson sea.
Another stared at the blue rings of smoke

A storm-scarred seaman puffed from a long pipe
Primed with the strange new herb they had lately found
In far Virginia. But the little ship
Now plunging into Plymouth Bay none saw.
E'en when she had anchored and her straining boat
Had touched the land, and the boat's crew over the quays
Leapt with a shout, scarce was there one to heed.
A seaman, smiling, swaggered out of the inn
Swinging in one brown hand a gleaming cage
Wherein a big green parrot chattered and clung
Fluttering against the wires. A troop of girls
With arms linked paused to watch the game of bowls;
And now they flocked around the cage, while one
With rosy finger tempted the horny beak
To bite. Close overhead a sea-mew flashed
Seaward. Once, from an open window, soft
Through trellised leaves, not far away, a voice
Floated, a voice that flushed the cheek of Drake,
The voice of Bess, bending her glossy head
Over the broidery frame, in a quiet song.

The song ceased. Still, with rainbows in their eyes,
The schoolboys watched the bowls like cannon-balls
Roll from the hand of gods along the turf.

Suddenly, tow'rds the green, a little cloud
Of seamen, shouting, stumbling, as they ran
Drew all eyes on them. The game ceased. A voice
Rough with the storms of many an ocean roared
"Drake! Cap'en Drake! The Armada!
They are in the Channel! We sighted them—
A line of battle-ships! We could not see
An end of them. They stretch from north to south
Like a great storm of clouds, glinting with guns,
From sky to sky!"
So, after all his strife,
The wasted weeks had tripped him, the fierce hours
Of pleading for the sea's command, great hours

And golden moments, all were lost. The fleet
Of Spain had won the Channel without a blow.
All eyes were turned on Drake, as he stood there
A giant against the sunset and the sea
Looming, alone. Far off, the first white star
Gleamed in a rosy space of heaven. He tossed
A grim black ball i' the lustrous air and laughed,—
"Come, lads," he said, "we've time to finish the game!"

BOOK XI.

Few minutes, and well wasted those, were spent
On that great game of bowls; for well knew Drake
What panic threatened Plymouth, since his fleet
Lay trapped there by the black head-wind that blew
Straight up the Sound, and Plymouth town itself,
Except the ships won seaward ere the dawn,
Lay at the Armada's mercy. Never a seaman
Of all the sea-dogs clustered on the quays,
And all the captains clamouring round Lord Howard,
Hoped that one ship might win to the open sea:
At dawn, they thought, the Armada's rolling guns
To windward, in an hour, must shatter them,
Huddled in their red slaughter-house like sheep.

Now was the great sun sunken and the night
Dark. Far to Westward, like the soul of man
Fighting blind nature, a wild flare of red
Upon some windy headland suddenly leapt
And vanished flickering into the clouds. Again
It leapt and vanished: then all at once it streamed
Steadily as a crimson torch upheld
By Titan hands to heaven. It was the first
Beacon! A sudden silence swept along
The seething quays, and in their midst appeared
Drake.
Then the jubilant thunder of his voice
Rolled, buffeting the sea-wind far and nigh,
And ere they knew what power as of a sea

Surged through them, his immortal battle-ship
Revenge had flung out cables to the quays,
And while the seamen, as he had commanded,
Knotted thick ropes together, he stood apart
(For well he knew what panic threatened still)
Whittling idly at a scrap of wood,
And carved a little boat out for the child
Of some old sea-companion.
So great and calm a master of the world
Seemed Drake that, as he whittled, and the chips
Fluttered into the blackness over the quay,
Men said that in this hour of England's need
Each tiny flake turned to a battle-ship ;
For now began the lanthorns, one by one,
To glitter, and half-reveal the shadowy hulks
Before him.—So the huge old legend grew,
Not all unworthy the Homeric age
Of gods and god-like men.
St Michael's Mount,
Answering the first wild beacon far away,
Rolled crimson thunders to the stormy sky!
The ropes were knotted. Through the panting dark
Great heaving lines of seamen all together
Hauled with a shout, and all together again
Hauled with a shout against the roaring wind ;
And slowly, slowly, onward tow'rds the sea
Moved the *Revenge*, and seaward ever heaved
The brawny backs together, and in their midst,
Suddenly, as they slackened, Drake was there
Hauling like any ten, and with his heart
Doubling the strength of all, giving them joy
Of battle against those odds,—Ay, till they found
Delight i' the burning tingle of the blood
That even their hardy hands must feel besmear
The harsh, rough, straining ropes. There as they toiled,
Answering a score of hills, old Beachy Head
Streamed like a furnace to the rolling clouds.
Then all around the coast each windy ness

And craggy mountain kindled. Peak from peak
Caught the tremendous fire, and passed it on
Round the bluff East and the black mouth of Thames,—
Ay, Northward to the waste wild Yorkshire fells
And gloomy Cumberland, where, like a giant,
Great Skiddaw grasped the red tempestuous brand,
And thrust it up against the reeling heavens.
Then all night long, inland, the wandering winds
Ran wild with clamour and clash of startled bells;
All night the cities seethed with torches, flashed
With twenty thousand flames of burnished steel;
While over the trample and thunder of hooves blazed forth
The lightning of wild trumpets. Lonely lanes
Of country darkness, lit by cottage doors
Entwined with rose and honeysuckle, roared
Like mountain-torrents now—East, West, and South,
As to the coasts with pike and musket streamed
The trained bands, horse and foot, from every town
And every hamlet. All the shaggy hills
From Milford Haven to the Downs of Kent,
And up to Humber, gleamed with many a hedge
Of pikes between the beacon's crimson glares;
While in red London forty thousand men,
In case the Invader should prevail, drew swords
Around their Queen. All night in dark St Paul's,
While round it rolled a multitudinous roar
As of the Atlantic on a Western beach,
And all the leaning London streets were lit
With fury of torches, rose the passionate prayer
Of England's peril:

O Lord God of Hosts,
Let Thine enemies know that Thou hast taken
England into Thine hands!

The mighty sound
Rolled, billowing round the kneeling aisles, then died,
Echoing up the heights. A voice, far off,
As on the cross of Calvary, caught it up
And poured the prayer o'er that deep hush, alone:

We beseech Thee, O God, to go before our armies,
Bless and prosper them both by land and sea!
Grant unto them Thy victory, O God,
As Thou usedst to do to Thy children when they please Thee!
All power, all strength, all victory come from Thee!
Then from the lips of all those thousands burst
A sound as from the rent heart of an ocean,
One tumult, one great rushing storm of wings
Cleaving the darkness round the Gates of Heaven:
Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses;
But we will remember Thy name, O Lord our God!

So, while at Plymouth Sound her seamen toiled
All through the night, and scarce a ship had won
Seaward, the heart of England cried to God.
All night, while trumpets yelled and blared without,
And signal cannon shook the blazoned panes,
And billowing multitudes went thundering by,
Amid that solemn pillared hush arose
From lips of kneeling thousands one great prayer
Storming the Gates of Heaven! *O Lord, our God,*
Heavenly Father, have mercy upon our Queen,
To whom Thy far dispersèd flock do fly
In the anguish of their souls. Behold, behold,
How many princes band themselves against her,
How long Thy servant hath laboured to them for peace,
How proudly they prepare themselves for battle!
Arise, therefore! Maintain Thine own cause,
Judge Thou between her and her enemies!
She seeketh not her own honour, but Thine,
Not the dominions of others, but Thy truth,
Not bloodshed but the saving of the afflicted!
O rend the heavens, therefore, and come down,
Deliver Thy people!
To vanquish is all one with Thee, by few
Or many, want or wealth, weakness or strength.
The cause is Thine, the enemies Thine, the afflicted
Thine! The honour, victory, and triumph

Thine! Grant her people now one heart, one mind,
One strength. Give unto her councils and her captains
Wisdom and courage strongly to withstand
The forces of her enemies, that the fame
And glory of Thy Kingdom may be spread
Unto the ends of the world. Father, we crave
This in Thy mercy, for the precious death
Of Thy dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ!
Amen.
And as the dreadful dawn thro' mist-wreaths broke,
And out of Plymouth Sound at last, with cheers
Ringing from many a thousand throats, there struggled
Six little ships, all that the night's long toil
Had warped down to the sea (but leading them
The ship of Drake) there rose one ocean-cry
From all those worshippers—*Let God arise,*
And let His enemies be scattered!

Under the leaden fogs of that new dawn,
Empty and cold, indifferent as death,
The sea heaved strangely to the seamen's eyes,
Seeing all round them only the leaden surge
Wrapped in wet mists or flashing here and there
With crumbling white. Against the cold wet wind
Westward the little ships of England beat
With short tacks, close inshore, striving to win
The windward station of the threatening battle
That neared behind the veil. Six little ships,
No more, beat Westward, even as all mankind
Beats up against that universal wind
Whereon like withered leaves all else is blown
Down one wide way to death: the soul alone,
Whether at last it wins, or faints and fails,
Stems the dark tide with its intrepid sails.
Close-hauled, with many a short tack, struggled and strained,
North-west, South-west, the ships; but ever Westward gained

Some little way with every tack; and soon,
While the prows plunged beneath the grey-gold noon,
Lapped by the crackling waves, even as the wind
Died down a little, in the mists behind
Stole out from Plymouth Sound the struggling score
Of ships that might not win last night to sea.
They followed; but the Six went on before,
Not knowing, alone, for God and Liberty.

Now, as they tacked North-west, the sullen roar
Of reefs crept out, or some strange bleating sound
Of sheep upon the hills. South-west once more
The bo'sun's whistle swung their bowsprits round;

South-west until the long low lapping splash
Was all they heard, of keels that still ran out
Seaward, then with one muffled heave and crash
Once more the whistles brought their sails about.

And now the noon began to wane; the West
With slow rich colours filled and shadowy forms,
Dark curdling wreaths and fogs with crimsoned breast,
And tangled zones of dusk like frozen storms,

Motionless, flagged with sunset, hulled with doom
Motionless? Nay, across the darkening deep
Surely the whole sky moved its gorgeous gloom
Onward; and like the curtains of a sleep

The red fogs crumbled, mists dissolved away!
There, like death's secret dawning thro' a dream,
Great thrones of thunder dusked the dying day,
And, higher, pale towers of cloud began to gleam.

There, in one heaven-wide storm, great masts and clouds
Of sail crept slowly forth, the ships of Spain!
From North to South, their tangled spars and shrouds
Controlled the slow wind as with bit and rein;

Onward they rode in insolent disdain
Sighting the little fleet of England there,
While o'er the sullen splendour of the main
Three solemn guns tolled all their host to prayer,
And their great ensign blazoned all the doom-fraught air.

The sacred standard of their proud crusade
Up to the mast-head of their flag-ship soared:
On one side knelt the Holy Mother-maid,
On one the crucified Redeemer poured
His blood, and all their kneeling hosts adored
Their saints, and clouds of incense heavenward streamed,
While pomp of cannonry and pike and sword
Down long sea-lanes of mocking menace gleamed,
And chant of priests rolled out o'er seas that darkly dreamed.

Who comes to fight for England? Is it ye,
Six little straws that dance upon the foam?
Ay, sweeping o'er the sunset-crimsoned sea
Let the proud pageant in its glory come,
Leaving the sunset like a hecatomb
Of souls whose bodies yet endure the chain!
Let slaves, by thousands, branded, scarred and dumb,
In those dark galleys grip their oars again,
And o'er the rolling deep bring on the pomp of Spain;—

Bring on the pomp of royal paladins
(For all the princedoms of the land are there!)
And for the gorgeous purple of their sins
The papal pomp bring on with psalm and prayer:
Nearer the splendour heaves; can ye not hear
The rushing foam, not see the blazoned arms,
And black-faced hosts thro' leagues of golden air
Crowding the decks, muttering their beads and charms
To where, in furthest heaven, they thicken like locust-swarms?

Bring on the pomp and pride of old Castille,
Blazon the skies with royal Aragon,
Beneath Oquendo let old ocean reel,
The purple pomp of priestly Rome bring on;
And let her censers dusk the dying sun,
The thunder of her banners on the breeze
Following Sidonia's glorious galleon
Deride the sleeping thunder of the seas,
While twenty thousand warriors chant her litanies.

Lo, all their decks are kneeling! Sky to sky
Responds! It is their solemn evening hour.
SALVE REGINA, though the daylight die,
SALVE REGINA, though the darkness lour;
Have they not still the kingdom and the power?
SALVE REGINA, hark, their thousands cry,
From where like clouds to where like mountains tower
Their crowded galleons looming far or nigh,
SALVE REGINA, hark, what distant seas reply!

What distant seas, what distant ages hear?
Bring on the pomp! the sun of Spain goes down:
The moon but swells the tide of praise and prayer;
Bring on the world-wide pomp of her renown;
Let darkness crown her with a starrier crown,
And let her watch the fierce waves crouch and fawn
Round those huge hulks from which her cannon frown,
While close inshore the wet sea-mists are drawn
Round England's Drake: then wait, in triumph, for the dawn.

The sun of Rome goes down; the night is dark!
Still are her thousands praying, still their cry
Ascends from the wide waste of waters, hark!
AVE MARIA, darker grows the sky!

Ave Maria, *those about to die*
Salute thee! Nay, what wandering winds blaspheme
With random gusts of chilling prophecy
Against the solemn sounds that heavenward stream!
The night is come at last. Break not the splendid dream.

But through the misty darkness, close inshore,
North-west, South-west, and ever Westward strained
The little ships of England, all night long,
As down the coast the reddening beacons leapt,
The crackle and lapping splash of tacking keels,
The bo'suns' low sharp whistles and the whine
Of ropes, mixing with many a sea-bird's cry
Disturbed the darkness, waking vague swift fears
Among the mighty hulks of Spain that lay
Nearest, then fading through the mists inshore
North-west, then growing again, but farther down
Their ranks to Westward with each dark return
And dark departure, till the rearmost rank
Of grim sea-castles heard the swish and creak
Pass plashing seaward thro' the wet sea-mists
To windward now of all that monstrous host,
Then heard no more than wandering sea-birds' cries
Wheeling around their leagues of lanthorn-light,
Or heave of waters, waiting for the dawn.

Dawn, everlasting and almighty dawn
Rolled o'er the waters, the grey mists were fled:
See, in their reeking heaven-wide crescent drawn
Those masts and spars and cloudy sails, outspread
Like one great sulphurous tempest soaked with red,
In vain withstand the march of brightening skies:
The dawn sweeps onward and the night is dead,
And lo, to windward, what bright menace lies,
What glory kindles now in England's wakening eyes?

There, on the glittering plains of open sea,
To windward now, behind the fleets of Spain,
Two little files of ships are tossing free,
Free of the winds and of the wind-swept main:
Were they not trapped? Who brought them forth again,
Free of the great new fields of England's war,
With sails like blossoms shining after rain,
And guns that sparkle to the morning star?
Drake!—first upon the deep that rolls to Trafalgar!

And Spain knows well that flag of fiery fame,
Spain knows who leads those files across the sea;
Implacable, invincible, his name
El Draque, creeps hissing through her ranks to lee;
But now she holds the rolling heavens in fee,
His ships are few. *They surge across the foam*,
The hunt is up! But need the mountains flee
Or fear the snarling wolf-pack? Let them come!
They crouch, but dare not leap upon the flanks of Rome.

Nearer they come and nearer! Nay, prepare!
Close your huge ranks that sweep from sky to sky!
Madness itself would shrink; but Drake will dare
Eternal hell! Let the great signal fly—
Close up your ranks; El Draque comes down to die!
El Draque is brave! The vast sea-cities loom
Thro' heaven: Spain spares one smile of chivalry,
One wintry smile across her cannons' gloom
As that frail fleet full-sail comes rushing tow'rds its doom.

Suddenly, as the wild change of a dream,
Even as the Spaniards watched those lean sharp prows
Leap straight at their huge hulks, watched well content,
Knowing their foes, once grappled, must be doomed;
Even as they caught the rush and hiss of foam
Across that narrow, dwindling gleam of sea,

And heard, abruptly close, the sharp commands
And steady British answers, caught one glimpse
Of bare-armed seamen waiting by their guns,
The vision changed! The ships of England swerved
Swiftly—a volley of flame and thunder swept
Blinding the buffeted air, a volley of iron
From four sheer broadsides, crashing thro' a hulk
Of Spain. She reeled, blind in the fiery surge
And fury of that assault. So swift it seemed
That as she heeled to leeward, ere her guns
Trained on the foe once more, the sulphurous cloud
That wrapped the sea, once, twice, and thrice again
Split with red thunder-claps that rent and raked
Her huge beams through and through. Ay, as she heeled
To leeward still, her own grim cannon belched
Their lava skyward, wounding the void air,
And, as by miracle, the ships of Drake
Were gone. Along the Spanish rear they swept
From North to South, raking them as they went
At close range, hardly a pistol-shot away,
With volley on volley. Never Spain had seen
Seamen or marksmen like to these who sailed
Two knots against her one. They came and went,
Suddenly neared or sheered away at will
As if by magic, pouring flame and iron
In four full broadsides thro' some Spanish hulk
Ere one of hers burst blindly at the sky.
Southward, along the Spanish rear they swept,
Then swung about, and volleying sheets of flame,
Iron, and death, along the same fierce road
Littered with spars, reeking with sulphurous fumes,
Returned, triumphantly rushing, all their sails
Alow, aloft, full-bellied with the wind.

Then, then, from sky to sky, one mighty surge
  Of baleful pride, huge wrath, stormy disdain,
With shuddering clouds and towers of sail would urge
  Onward the heaving citadels of Spain,

Which dragged earth's thunders o'er the groaning main,
And held the panoplies of faith in fee,
Beating against the wind, struggling in vain
To close with that swift ocean-cavalry:
Spain had all earth in charge! Had England, then, the sea?

Spain had the mountains—mountains flow like clouds
Spain had great kingdoms—kingdoms melt away!
Yet, in that crescent, army on army crowds,
How shall she fear what seas or winds can say?—
The seas that leap and shine round earth's decay,
The winds that mount and sing while empires fall,
And mountains pass like waves in the wind's way,
And dying gods thro' shuddering twilights call;
Had England, then, the sea that sweeps o'er one and all?

See, in gigantic wrath the *Rata* hurls
Her mighty prows round to the wild sea-wind:
The deep like one black maelstrom round her swirls
While great Recaldé follows hard behind:
Reeling, like Titans, thunder-blasted, blind,
They strive to cross the ships of England—yea,
Challenge them to the grapple, and only find
Red broadsides bursting o'er the bursting spray,
And England surging still along her windward way!

To windward still *Revenge* and *Raleigh* flash
And thunder, and the sea flames red between:
In vain against the wind the galleons crash
And plunge and pour blind volleys thro' the screen
Of rolling sulphurous clouds at dimly seen
Topsails that, to and fro, like sea-birds fly!
Ever to leeward the great hulks careen;
Their thousand cannon can but wound the sky,
While England's little *Rainbow* foams and flashes by.

Suddenly the flag-ship of Recaldé, stung
To fury it seemed, heeled like an avalanche
To leeward, then reeled out beyond the rest
Against the wind, alone, daring the foe
To grapple her. At once the little *Revenge*
With Drake's flag flying flashed at her throat,
And hardly a cable's-length away out-belched
Broadside on broadside, under those great cannon,
Crashing through five-foot beams, four shots to one,
While Howard and the rest swept to and fro
Keeping at deadly bay the rolling hulks
That looming like Leviathans now plunged
Desperately against the freshening wind
To rescue the great flag-ship where she lay
Alone, amid the cannonades of Drake,
Alone, like a volcanic island lashed
With crimson hurricanes, dinning the winds
With isolated thunders, flaking the skies
With wrathful lava, while great spars and blocks
Leapt through the cloudy glare and fell, far off,
Like small black stones into the hissing sea.

Oquendo saw her peril far away!
His rushing prow thro' heaven begins to loom,
Oquendo, first in all that proud array,
Hath heart the pride of Spain to reassume:
He comes; the rolling seas are dusked with gloom
Of his great sails! Now round him once again,
Thrust out your oars, ye mighty hulks of doom;
Forward, with hiss of whip and clank of chain!
Let twice ten hundred slaves bring on the wrath of Spain!

Sidonia comes! Toledo comes!—huge ranks
That rally against the storm from sky to sky,
As down the dark blood-rusted chain-locked planks
Of labouring galleys the dark slave-guards ply

Their knotted scourges, and the red flakes fly
From bare scarred backs that quiver and heave once more,
And slaves that heed not if they live or die
Pull with numb arms at many a red-stained oar,
Nor know the sea's dull crash from cannon's growing roar.

Bring on the wrath! From heaven to rushing heaven
The white foam sweeps around their fierce array;
In vain before their shattering crimson levin
The ships of England flash and dart away:
Not England's heart can hold that host at bay!
See, a swift signal shoots along her line,
Her ships are scattered, they fly, they fly like spray
Driven against the wind by wrath divine,
While, round Recaldé now, Sidonia's cannon shine.

The wild sea-winds with golden trumpets blaze!
One wave will wash away the crimson stain
That blots Recaldé's decks. Her first amaze
Is over: down the Channel once again
Turns the triumphant pageantry of Spain
In battle-order, now. Behind her, far,
While the broad sun sinks to the Western main,
Glitter the little ships of England's war,
And over them in heaven glides out the first white star.

The sun goes down: the heart of Spain is proud:
Her censers fume, her golden trumpets blow!
Into the darkening East with cloud on cloud
Of broad-flung sail her huge sea-castles go:
Rich under blazoned poops like rose-flushed snow
Tosses the foam. Far off the sunset gleams:
Her banners like a thousand sunsets glow,
As down the darkening East the pageant streams,
Full-fraught with doom for England, rigged with princely dreams.

Nay, "rigged with curses dark," as o'er the waves
Drake watched them slowly sweeping into the gloom
That thickened down the Channel, watched them go
In ranks compact, roundels impregnable,
With Biscay's bristling broad-beamed squadron drawn
Behind for rear-guard. As the sun went down
Drake flew the council-flag. Across the sea
That gleamed still like a myriad-petalled rose
Up to the little *Revenge* the pinnaces foamed.
There, on Drake's powder-grimed escutcheoned poop
They gathered, Admirals and great flag-captains,
Hawkins, Frobisher, shining names and famous,
And some content to serve and follow and fight
Where duty called unknown, but heroes all.
High on the poop they clustered, gazing East
With faces dark as iron against the flame
Of sunset, eagle-faces, iron lips,
And keen eyes fiercely flashing as they turned
Like sword-flames now, or dark and deep as night
Watching the vast Armada slowly mix
Its broad-flung sails with twilight where it dragged
Thro' thickening heavens its curdled storm of clouds
Down the wide darkening Channel.
"My Lord Howard,"
Said Drake, "it seems we have but scarred the skins
Of those huge hulks: the hour grows late for England.
'Twere well to handle them again at once." A growl
Of fierce approval answered; but Lord Howard
Cried out, "Attack we cannot, save at risk
Of our whole fleet. It is not death I fear,
But England's peril. We have fought all day,
Accomplished nothing! Half our powder is spent!
I think it best to hang upon their flanks
Till we be reinforced!"
"My lord," said Drake,
"Had we that week to spare for which I prayed,
And were we handling them in Spanish seas,
We might delay. There is no choosing now.

Yon hulks of doom are steadfastly resolved
On one tremendous path and solid end—
To join their powers with Parma's thirty thousand
(Not heeding our light horsemen of the sea),
Then in one earthquake of o'erwhelming arms
Roll Europe over England. They've not grasped
The first poor thought which now and evermore
Must be the sceptre of Britain, the steel trident
Of ocean-sovereignty. That mighty fleet
Invincible, impregnable, omnipotent,
Must here and now be shattered, never be joined
With Parma, never abase the wind-swept sea,
With oaken roads for thundering legions
To trample in the splendour of the sun
From Europe to our island.
As for food,
In yonder enemy's fleet there is food enough
To feed a nation ; ay, and powder enough
To split an empire. I will answer for it
Ye shall not lack of either, nor for shot,
Not though ye pluck them out of your own beams
To feed your hungry cannon. Cast your bread
Upon the waters. Think not of the Queen!
She will not send it! For she hath not known
(How could she know?) this wide new realm of hers,
When we ourselves—her seamen—scarce have learnt
What means this kingdom of the ocean-sea
To England and her throne—food, life-blood, life!
She could not understand who, when our ships
Put out from Plymouth, hardly gave them store
Of powder and shot to last three fighting days,
Or rations even for those. Blame not the Queen,
Who hath striven for England as no king hath fought
Since England was a nation. Bear with me,
For I must pour my heart before you now
This one last time. Yon fishing-boats have brought
Tidings how on this very day she rode
Before her mustered pikes at Tilbury.

Methinks I see her riding down their lines
High on her milk-white Barbary charger, hear
Her voice—'My people, though my flesh be woman,
My heart is of your kingly lion's breed:
I come myself to lead you!' I see the sun
Shining upon her armour, hear the voice
Of all her armies roaring like one sea—
God save Elizabeth, our English Queen!
'God save her,' I say, too; but still she dreams,
As all too many of us—bear with me!—dream,
Of Creçy, when our England's war was thus;
When we, too, hurled our hosts across the deep
As now Spain dreams to hurl them on our isle.
But now our war is otherwise. We claim
The sea's command, and Spain shall never land
One swordsman on our island. Blame her not,
But look not to the Queen. The people fight
This war of ours, not princes. In this hour
God maketh us a people. We have seen
Victories, never victory like to this,
When in our England's darkest hour of need
Her seamen, without wage, powder, or food,
Are yet on fire to fight for her. Your ships
Tossing in the great sunset of an Empire,
Dawn of a sovereign people, are all manned
By heroes, raggéd, hungry, who will die
Like flies ere long, because they have no food
But turns to fever-breeding carrion
Not fit for dogs. They are half-naked, hopeless
Living, of any reward; and if they die
They die a dog's death. We shall reap the fame
While they—great God! and all this cannot quench
The glory in their eyes. They will be served
Six at the mess of four, eking it out
With what their own rude nets may catch by night,
Silvering the guns and naked arms that haul
Under the stars with silver past all price,
While some small ship-boy in the black crow's nest

Watches across the waters for the foe.
My lord, it is a terrible thing for Spain
When poor men thus go out against her princes;
For so God whispers 'Victory' in our ears,
I cannot dare to doubt it."
Once again
A growl of fierce approval answered him,
And Hawkins cried—"I stand by Francis Drake";
But Howard, clinging to his old-world order,
Yet with such manly strength as dared to rank
Drake's wisdom of the sea above his own,
Sturdily shook his head. "I dare not risk
A close attack. Once grappled we are doomed.
We'll follow on their trail no less, with Drake
Leading. Our oriflamme to-night shall be
His cresset and stern-lanthorn. Where that shines
We follow."
Drake, still thinking in his heart,—
"And if Spain be not shattered here and now
We are doomed no less," must even rest content
With that good vantage.
As the sunset died
Over the darkling emerald seas that swelled
Before the freshening wind, the pinnaces dashed
To their own ships; and into the mind of Drake
There stole a plot that twitched his lips to a smile.
High on the heaving purple of the poop
Under the glimmer of firm and full-blown sails
He stood, an iron statue, glancing back
Anon at his stern-cresset's crimson flare,
The star of all the shadowy ships that plunged
Like ghosts amid the grey stream of his wake,
And all around him heard the low keen song
Of hidden ropes above the wail and creak
Of blocks and long low swish of cloven foam,
A keen rope-music in the formless night,
A harmony, a strong intent good sound,
Well-strung and taut, singing the will of man.

"Your oriflamme," he muttered,—"so you travail
With sea-speech in the tongue of old Poictiers—
Shall be my own stern-lanthorn. Watch it well,
My good lord Howard."
Over the surging seas
The little *Revenge* went swooping on the trail,
Leading the ships of England. One by one
Out of the gloom before them slowly crept,
Sinister gleam by gleam, like blood-red stars,
The rearmost lanthorns of the Spanish Fleet,
A shaggy purple sky of secret storm
Heaving from north to south upon the black
Breast of the waters. Once again with lips
Twitched to a smile, Drake suddenly bade them crowd
All sail upon the little *Revenge*. She leapt
Forward. Smiling he watched the widening gap
Between the ships that followed and her light,
Then as to those behind, its flicker must seem
Wellnigh confused with those of Spain, he cried,
"Now, master bo'sun, quench their oriflamme,
Dip their damned cresset in the good black Sea!
The rearmost light of Spain shall lead them now,
A little closer, if they think it ours.
Pray God, they come to blows!"
Even as he spake
His cresset-flare went out in the thick night:
A fluttering as of blind bewildered moths
A moment seized upon the shadowy ships
Behind him, then with crowded sail they steered
Straight for the rearmost cresset-flare of Spain.

BOOK XII.

MEANWHILE, as in the gloom he slipped aside
Along the Spanish ranks, waiting the crash
Of battle, suddenly Drake became aware
Of strange sails bearing up into the wind
Around his right, and thought, "the Armada strives
To weather us in the dark." Down went his helm,
And all alone the little *Revenge* gave chase,
Till as the moon crept slowly forth, she stood
Beside the ghostly ships, only to see
Bewildered Flemish merchantmen, amazed
With fears of Armageddon—such vast shrouds
Had lately passed them on the rolling seas.
Down went his helm again, with one grim curse
Upon the chance that led him thus astray;
And down the wind the little *Revenge* once more
Swept on the trail. Fainter and fainter now
Glared the red beacons on the British coasts,
And the wind slackened and the glimmering East
Greyed and reddened, yet Drake had not regained
Sight of the ships. When the full glory of dawn
Dazzled the sea, he found himself alone,
With one huge galleon helplessly drifting
A cable's-length away. Around her prow,
Nuestra Señora del Rosario,
Richly emblazoned, gold on red, proclaimed
The flagship of great Valdes, of the fleet
Of Andalusia, captain-general. She,
Last night, in dark collision with the hulks

Of Spain, had lost her foremast. Through the night
Her guns, long rank on deadly rank, had kept
All enemies at bay. Drake summoned her
Instantly to surrender. She returned
A scornful answer from the glittering poop
Where two-score officers crowned the golden sea
And stained the dawn with blots of richer colour
Loftily clustered in the glowing sky,
Doubleted with cramoisy velvet, wreathed
With golden chains, blazing with jewelled swords
And crusted poignards. "What proud haste was this?"
They asked, glancing at their huge tiers of cannon
And crowded decks of swarthy soldiery;
"What madman in yon cockle-shell defied
Spain?"
"Tell them it is El Draque," he said, "who lacks
The time to parley; therefore it will be well
They strike at once, for I am in great haste."
There, at the sound of that renownéd name,
Without a word down came their blazoned flag!
Like a great fragment of the dawn it lay
Crumpled upon their decks. . . .

Into the soft bloom and Italian blue
Of sparkling, ever-beautiful Torbay,
Belted as with warm Mediterranean crags,
The little *Revenge* foamed with her mighty prize,
A prize indeed—not for the casks of gold
Drake split in the rich sunlight and poured out
Like dross amongst his men, but in her hold
Lay many tons of powder, worth their weight
In rubies now to Britain. Into the hands
Of swarthy Brixham fishermen he gave
Prisoners and prize, then—loaded stem to stern
With powder and shot—their swiftest trawlers flew
Like falcons following a thunder-cloud
Behind him, as with crowded sail he rushed
On England's trail once more. Like a caged lion

Drake paced his deck, praying he yet might reach
The fight in time; and ever the warm light wind
Slackened. Not till the sun was half-way fallen
Once more crept out in front those dusky thrones
Of thunder, heaving on the smooth bright sea
From North to South with Howard's clustered fleet
Like tiny clouds, becalmed, not half a mile
Behind the Spaniards. For the breeze had failed
Their blind midnight pursuit; and now attack
Seemed hopeless. Even as Drake drew nigh, the last
Breath of the wind sank. One more day had flown,
Nought was accomplished; and the Armada lay
Some leagues of golden sea-way nearer now
To its great goal. The sun went down: the moon
Rose glittering. Hardly a cannon-shot apart
The two fleets lay becalmed upon the silver
Swell of the smooth night-tide. The hour had come
For Spain to strike. The ships of England drifted
Helplessly, at the mercy of those great hulks
Oared by their thousand slaves.

Onward they came,
Swinging suddenly in tremendous gloom
Over the silver seas. But even as Drake,
With eyes on fire at last for his last fight,
Measured the distance ere he gave the word
To greet it with his cannon, suddenly
The shining face of the deep began to shiver
With dusky patches: the doomed English sails
Quivered and, filling smart from the North-east,
The little *Revenge* rushed down their broken line
Signalling them to follow, and ere they knew
What miracle had saved them, they all sprang
Their luff and ran large out to sea. For now
The Armada lay to windward, and to fight
Meant to be grappled and overwhelmed; but dark
Within the mind of Drake, a fiercer plan
Already had shaped itself.

"They fly! They fly!"

Rending the heavens from twice ten thousand throats
A mighty shout rose from the Spanish Fleet.
Over the moonlit waves their galleons came
Towering, crowding, plunging down the wind
In full chase, while the tempter, Drake, laughed low
To watch their solid battle-order break
And straggle. When once more the golden dawn
Dazzled the deep, the labouring galleons lay
Scattered by their unequal speed. The wind
Veered as the sun rose. Once again the ships
Of England lay to windward. Down swooped Drake
Where like a mountain the *San Marcos* heaved
Her giant flanks alone, having out-sailed
Her huge companions. Then the sea-winds blazed
With broadsides. Two long hours the sea flamed red
All round her. One by one the Titan ships
Came surging to her rescue, and met the buffet
Of battle-thunders, belching iron and flame;
Nor could they pluck her forth from that red chaos
Till great Oquendo hurled his mighty prows
Crashing athwart those thunders, and once more
Gathered into unshakeable battle-order
The whole Armada raked the reeking seas.
Then up the wind the ships of England sheered
Once more, and one more day drew to its close,
With little accomplished, half their powder spent,
And all the Armada moving as of old,
From sky to sky one heaven-wide zone of storm,
(Though some three galleons out of all their host
Laboured woundily) down the darkening Channel.
And all night long on England's guardian heights
The beacons reddened, and all the next long day
The impregnable Armada never swerved
From its tremendous path. In vain did Drake,
Frobisher, Hawkins, Howard, greatest names
In all our great sea-history, hover and dart
Like falcons round the mountainous array.
Till now, as night fell and they lay abreast

Of the Isle of Wight, once more the council flag
Flew from the little *Revenge*. With iron face
Thrust close to Howard's, and outstretched iron arm,
Under the stars Drake pointed down the coast
Where the red beacons flared. "The shoals," he hissed,
"The shoals from Owers to Spithead and the net
Of channels yonder in Portsmouth Roads. At dawn
They'll lie to leeward of the Invincible
Fleet!"

Swiftly, in mighty sweeping lines Drake set
Before the council his fierce battle-plan
To drive the Armada down upon the banks
And utterly shatter it—stroke by well-schemed stroke
As he unfolded there his vital plot
And touched their dead cold warfare into life
Where plan before was none, he seemed to tower
Above them, clad with the deep night of stars;
And those that late would rival knew him now,
In all his great simplicity, their king,
One of the gods of battle, England's Drake,
A soul that summoned Cæsar from his grave,
And swept with Alexander o'er the deep.

So when the dawn thro' rolling wreaths of cloud
Struggled, and all the waves were molten gold,
The heart of Spain exulted, for she saw
The little fleet of England cloven in twain
As if by some strange discord. A light breeze
Blew from the ripening East; and, up against it,
Urged by the very madness of defeat,
Or so it seemed, one half the British fleet
Drew nigh, towed by their boats, to challenge the vast
Tempest-winged heaving citadels of Spain,
At last to the murderous grapple; while far away
Their other half, led by the flag of Drake,
Stood out to sea, as if to escape the doom
Of that sheer madness, for the light wind now
Could lend them no such wings to hover and swoop

As heretofore. Nearer the mad ships came
Towed by their boats, till now upon their right
To windward loomed the Fleet Invincible
With all its thunder-clouds, and on their left
To leeward, gleamed the perilous white shoals
With their long level lightnings under the cliffs
Of England, from the green glad garden of Wight
To the Owers and Selsea Bill. Right on they came,
And suddenly the wrench of thundering cannon
Shook the vast hulks that towered above them. Red
Flamed the blue sea between. Thunder to thunder
Answered, and still the ships of Drake sped out
To the open sea. Sidonia saw them go,
Furrowing the deep that like a pale-blue shield
Lay diamond-dazzled now in the full light.
Rich was the omen of that day for Spain,
The feast-day of Sidonia's patron-saint!
And the priests chanted and the trumpets blew
Triumphantly! A universal shout
Went skyward from the locust-swarming decks,
A shout that rent the golden morning clouds
From heaven to menacing heaven, as castle to castle
Flew the great battle-signal, and like one range
Of moving mountains, those almighty ranks
Swept down upon the small forsaken ships!
The lion's brood was in the imperial nets
Of Spain at last. Onward the mountains came
With all their golden clouds of sail and flags
Like streaming cataracts; all their glorious chasms
And glittering steeps, echoing, re-echoing,
Calling, answering, as with the herald winds
That blow the golden trumpets of the morning
From Skiddaw to Helvellyn. In the midst
The great *San Martin* surged with heaven-wide press
Of proudly billowing sail; and yet once more
Slowly, solemnly, like another dawn
Up to her mast-head soared in thunderous gold
The sacred standard of their last crusade;

While round a hundred prows that heaved thro' heaven
Like granite cliffs, their black wet shining flanks,
And swept like moving promontories, rolled
The splendid long-drawn thunders of the foam,
And flashed the untamed white lightnings of the sea
Back to a morn unhalyarded of man,
Back to the unleashed sun and blazoned clouds
And azure sky—the unfettered flag of God.

Like one huge moving coast-line on they came
  Crashing, and closed the ships of England round
With one fierce crescent of thunder and sweeping flame,
  One crimson scythe of Death, whose long sweep drowned
The eternal ocean with its mighty sound,
  From heaven to heaven, one roar, one glitter of doom,
While out to the sea-line's blue remotest bound
  The ships of Drake still fled, and the red fume
Of battle thickened and shrouded shoal and sea with gloom.

The distant sea, the close white menacing shoals
  Are shrouded! And the lion's brood fight on!
And now death's very midnight round them rolls;
  Rent is the flag that late so proudly shone:
The red decks reel and their last hope seems gone!
  Round them they still keep clear one ring of sea:
It narrows; but the lion's brood fight on,
  Ungrappled still, still fearless and still free,
While the white menacing shoals creep slowly out to lee.

Now through the red rents of each fire-cleft cloud,
  High o'er the British blood-greased decks flash out
Thousands of swarthy faces, crowd on crowd
  Surging, with one tremendous hurricane shout
On, to the grapple! and still the grim redoubt
  Of the oaken bulwarks rolls them back again,
As buffeted waves that shatter in the furious bout
  When cannonading cliffs meet the full main
And hurl it back in smoke —so Britain hurls back Spain;

Hurls her back, only to see her return,
Darkening the heavens with billow on billow of sail:
Round that huge storm the waves like lava burn,
The daylight withers, and the sea-winds fail!
Seamen of England, what shall now avail
Your naked arms? Before those blasts of doom
The sun is quenched, the very sea-waves quail:
High overhead their triumphing thousands loom,
When hark! what low deep guns to windward suddenly boom?

What low deep strange new thunders far away
Respond to the triumphant shout of Spain?
Is it the wind that shakes their giant array?
Is it the deep wrath of the rising main?
Is it—*El Draque?* El Draque! Ay, shout again,
His thunders burst upon your windward flanks;
The shoals creep out to leeward! Is it plain
At last, what earthquake heaves your herded ranks
Huddled in huge dismay tow'rds those white foam-swept banks?

Plain, it was plain at last, what cunning lured,
What courage held them over the jaws o' the pit,
Till Drake could hurl them down. The little ships
Of Howard and Frobisher, towed by their boats,
Slipped away in the smoke, while out at sea
Drake, with a gale of wind behind him, crashed
Volley on volley into the helpless rear
Of Spain and drove it down, huddling the whole
Invincible Fleet together upon the verge
Of doom. One awful surge of stormy wrath
Heaved thro' the struggling citadels of Spain.
From East to West their desperate signal flew,
And like a drove of bullocks, with the foam
Flecking their giant sides, they staggered and swerved
Careening tow'rds the shallows as they turned,
Then in one wild stampede of sheer dismay

Rushed, tacking seaward, while the grey sea-plain
Smoked round them, and the cannonades of Drake
Raked their wild flight; and the crusading flag,
Tangled in one black maze of crashing spars,
Whirled downward like the pride of Lucifer
From heaven to hell.
Out tow'rds the coasts of France
They plunged, narrowly weathering the Ower banks;
Then, once again, they formed in ranks compact,
Roundels impregnable, wrathfully bent at last
Never to swerve again from their huge path
And solid end—to join with Parma's host,
And hurl the whole of Europe on our isle.
Another day was gone, much powder spent;
And, while Lord Howard exulted and conferred
Knighthoods on his brave seamen, Drake alone
Knew that his mighty plan, in spite of all,
Had failed, knew that wellnigh his last great chance
Was lost of wrecking the Spaniards ere they joined
Parma. The night went by, and the next day,
With scarce a visible scar the Invincible Fleet
Drew onwards tow'rds its goal, unshakeable now
In that grim battle-order. Beacons flared
Along the British coast, and pikes flashed out
All night, and a strange dread began to grip
The heart of England, as it seemed the might
Of seamen most renowned in all the world
Checked not that huge advance. Yet at the heart
Of Spain no less there clung a vampire fear
And strange foreboding, as the next day passed
Quietly, and behind her all day long
The shadowy ships of Drake stood on her trail
Quietly, patiently, as death or doom,
Unswerving and implacable.
While the sun
Sank thro' long crimson fringes on that eve,
The fleets were passing Calais and the wind
Blew fair behind them. A strange impulse seized

Spain to shake off those bloodhounds from her trail,
And suddenly the whole Invincible Fleet
Anchored, in hope the following wind would bear
The ships of England past and carry them down
To leeward. But their grim insistent watch
Was ready; and though their van had wellnigh crashed
Into the rear of Spain, in the golden dusk,
They, too, a cannon-shot away, at once
Anchored, to windward still.
Quietly heaved
The golden sea in that tremendous hour
Fraught with the fate of Europe and mankind,
As yet once more the flag of council flew,
And Hawkins, Howard, Frobisher, and Drake
Gathered together upon the little *Revenge*,
While like a triumphing fire the news was borne
To Spain, already, that the Invincible Fleet
Had reached its end, ay, and "that great black dog
Sir Francis Drake" was writhing now in chains
Beneath the torturer's hands.
High on his poop
He stood, a granite rock, above the throng
Of captains, there amid the breaking waves
Of clashing thought and swift opinion,
Silent, gazing where now the cool fresh wind
Blew steadily up the terrible North Sea
Which rolled under the clouds into a gloom
Unfathomable. Once only his lips moved
Half-consciously, breathing those mighty words,
The clouds His chariot! Then, suddenly, he turned
And looked upon the little flock of ships
That followed on the fleet of England, sloops
Helpless in fight. These, manned by the brave zeal
Of many a noble house, from hour to hour
Had plunged out from the coast to join his flag.
"Better if they had brought us powder and food
Than sought to join us thus," he had growled; but now
"Lord God," he cried aloud, "they'll light our road

To victory yet!" And in great sweeping strokes
Once more he drew his mighty battle-plan
Before the captains. In the thickening gloom
They stared at his grim face as at a man
Risen from hell, with all the powers of hell
At his command, a face tempered like steel
In the everlasting furnaces, a rock
Of adamant, while with a voice that blent
With the ebb and flow of the everlasting sea
He spake, and at the low deep menacing words
Monotonous with the unconquerable
Passion and level strength of his great soul
They shuddered; for the man seemed more than man,
And from his iron lips resounded doom
As from the lips of cannon, doom to Spain,
Inevitable, unconquerable doom.

And through that mighty host of Spain there crept
Cold winds of fear, as to the darkening sky
Once more from lips of kneeling thousands swept
The vespers of an Empire—one vast cry,
SALVE REGINA! God, what wild reply
Hissed from the clouds in that dark hour of dreams?
AVE MARIA, *those about to die*
Salute thee! See, what ghostly pageant streams
Above them? What thin hands point down like pale moonbeams?

Thick as the ghosts that Dante saw in hell
Whirled on the blast thro' boundless leagues of pain,
Thick, thick as wind-blown leaves innumerable,
In the Inquisition's yellow robes her slain
And tortured thousands, dense as the red rain
That wellnigh quenched her fires, went hissing by
With twisted shapes, raw from the racks of Spain,
SALVE REGINA!—rushing thro' the sky,
And pale hands pointing down and lips that mocked her cry.

Ten thousand times ten thousand!—what are these
That are arrayed in yellow robes and sweep
Between your prayers and God like phantom seas
Prophesying over your masts? Could Rome not keep
The keys? Who loosed these dead to break your sleep?
SALVE REGINA, cry, yea, cry aloud,
AVE MARIA! Ye have sown: shall ye not reap?
SALVE REGINA! Christ, what fiery cloud
Suddenly rolls to windward, high o'er mast and shroud?

Are hell-gates burst at last? For the black deep
To windward burns with streaming crimson fires!
Over the wild strange waves, they shudder and creep
Nearer—strange smoke-wreathed masts and spars, red spires
And blazing hulks, vast roaring blood-red pyres,
Fierce as the flames ye fed with flesh of men
Amid the imperial pomp and chanting choirs
Of Alva—from El Draque's red hand again
Sweep the wild fire-ships down upon the Fleet of Spain.

Onward before the freshening wind they come
Full fraught with all the terrors, all the bale
That flamed so long for the delight of Rome,
The shrieking fires that struck the sunlight pale,
The avenging fires at last! Now what avail
Your thousand ranks of cannon? Swift, cut free,
Cut your scorched cables! Cry, reel backward, quail,
Crash your huge huddled ranks together, flee!
Behind you roars the fire, before—the dark North Sea!
. . . . . .
Dawn, everlasting and omnipotent
Dawn rolled in crimson o'er the spar-strewn waves,
As the last trumpet shall in thunder roll
O'er heaven and earth and ocean. Far away,
The ships of Spain, great raggéd piles of gloom
And shaggy splendour, leaning to the North
Like sun-shot clouds confused, or rent apart

In scattered squadrons, furiously plunged,
Burying their mighty prows i' the broad grey rush
Of smoking billowy hills, or heaving high
Their giant bowsprits to the wandering heavens,
Labouring in vain to return, struggling to lock
Their far-flung ranks anew, but drifting still
To leeward, driven by the ever-increasing storm
Straight for the dark North Sea. Hard by there lurched
One gorgeous galleon on the ravening shoals,
Feeding the white maw of the famished waves
With gold and purple webs from kingly looms
And spilth of world-wide empires. Howard, still
Planning to pluck the Armada plume by plume,
Swooped down upon that prey and swiftly engaged
Her desperate guns; while Drake, our ocean-king,
Knowing the full worth of that doom-fraught hour,
Glanced neither to the left nor right, but stood
High on his poop, with calm implacable face
Gazing as into eternity, and steered
The crowded glory of his dawn-flushed sails
In superb onset, straight for the great fleet
Invincible; and after him the main
Of England's fleet, knowing its captain now,
Followed, and with them rushed—from sky to sky
One glittering charge of wrath—the storm's white waves,
The twenty thousand foaming chariots
Of God.

None but the everlasting voice
Of him who fought at Salamis might sing
The fight of that dread Sabbath. Not mankind
Waged it alone. War raged in heaven that day,
Where Michael and his angels drave once more
The hosts of darkness ruining down the abyss
Of chaos. Light against darkness, Liberty
Against all dark old despotism, unsheathed
The sword in that great hour. Behind the strife
Of men embattled deeps beyond all thought
Moved in their awful panoply, as move

Silent, invisible, swift, under the clash
Of waves and flash of foam, huge ocean-glooms
And vast reserves of inappellable power.
The bowsprits ranked on either fore-front seemed
But spear-heads of those dread antagonists
Invisible : the shuddering sails of Spain
Dusk with the shadow of death, the sunward sails
Of England full-fraught with the breath of God.
Onward the ships of England and God's waves
Triumphantly charged, glittering companions,
And poured their thunders on the extreme right
Of Spain, whose giant galleons as they lurched
Heavily to the roughening sea and wind
With all their grinding, wrenching cannon, worked
On rolling platforms by the helpless hands
Of twenty thousand soldiers, without skill
In stormy seas, rent the indifferent sky
Or tore the black troughs of the swirling deep
In vain, while volley on volley of flame and iron
Burst thro' their four-foot beams, fierce raking blasts
From ships that came and went on wings of the wind
All round their mangled bulk, scarce a pike's thrust
Away, sweeping their decks from stem to stern
(Between the rush and roar of the great green waves)
With crimson death, rending their timbered towns
And populous floating streets into wild squares
Of slaughter and devastation ; driving them down,
Huddled on their own centre, cities of shame
And havoc, in fiery forests of tangled wrath,
With hurricanes of huge masts and swarming spars
And multitudinous decks that heaved and sank
Like earthquake-smitten palaces, when doom
Comes, with one stride, across the pomp of kings.
All round them shouted the everlasting sea,
Burst in white thunders on the streaming poops
And blinded fifty thousand eyes with spray.
Once, as a gorgeous galleon, drenched with blood
Began to founder and settle, a British captain

Called from his bulwarks, bidding her fierce crew
Surrender and come aboard. Straight through the heart
A hundred muskets answered that appeal.
Sink or destroy! The deadly signal flew
From mast to mast of England. Once, twice, thrice,
A huge sea-castle heaved her haggled bulk
Heavenward, and with a cry that rent the heavens
From all her crowded decks, and one deep roar
As of a cloven world or the dark surge
Of chaos yawning, sank: the swirling slopes
Of the sweeping billowy hills for a moment swarmed
With struggling insect-men, sprinkling the foam
With tossing arms; then the indifferent sea
Rolled its grey smoking waves across the place
Where they had been. Here a great galleasse poured
Red rivers through her scuppers and torn flanks,
And there a galleon, wrapped in creeping fire,
Suddenly like a vast volcano split
Asunder, and o'er the vomiting sulphurous clouds
And spouting spread of crimson, flying spars
And heads torn from their trunks and scattered limbs
Leapt, hideous gouts of death, against the glare.
Hardly the thrust of a pike away, the ships
Of England flashed and swerved, till in one mass
Of thunder-blasted splendour and shuddering gloom
Those gorgeous floating citadels huddled and shrank
Their towers, and all the glory of dawn that rolled
And burned along the tempest of their banners
Withered, as on a murderer's face the light
Withers before the accuser. All their proud
Castles and towers and heaven-wide clouds of sail
Shrank to a darkening horror, like the heart
Of Evil, plucked from midnight's fiercest gloom,
With all its curses quivering and alive;
A horror of wild masts and tangled spars,
Like some great kraken with a thousand arms
Torn from the filthiest cavern of the deep,
Writhing, and spewing forth its venomous fumes

On every side. *Sink or destroy!*—all day
The deadly signal flew; and ever the sea
Swelled higher, and the flashes of the foam
Broadened and leapt and spread as a wild white fire
That flourishes with the wind; and ever the storm
Drave the grim battle onward to the wild
Menace of the dark North Sea. At set of sun,
Even as below the sea-line the broad disc
Sank like a red-hot cannon-ball through scurf
Of seething molten lead, the *Santa Maria*
Uttering one cry that split the heart of heaven
Went down with all hands, roaring into the dark.
Hardly five rounds of shot were left to Drake!
Gun after gun fell silent, as the night
Deepened—"Yet we must follow them to the North,"
He cried, "or they'll return yet to shake hands
With Parma! Come, we'll put a brag upon it,
And hunt them onward as we lacked for nought!"
So, when across the swinging smoking seas,
Grey and splendid and terrible broke the day
Once more, the flying Invincible fleet beheld
Upon their weather-beam, and dogging them
Like their own shadow, the dark ships of Drake,
Unswerving and implacable. Ever the wind
And sea increased; till now the heaving deep
Swelled all around them into sulky hills
And rolling mountains, whose majestic crests,
Like wild white flames far blown and savagely flickering
Swept thro' the clouds; and, on their vanishing slopes,
Past the pursuing fleet began to swirl
Scores of horses and mules, drowning or drowned,
Cast overboard to lighten the wild flight
Of Spain, and save her water-casks, a trail
Telling of utmost fear. And ever the storm
Roared louder across the leagues of rioting sea,
Driving her onward like a mighty stag
Chased by the wolves. Off the dark Firth of Forth
At last, Drake signalled and lay head to wind,

Watching. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand,"
He muttered, as, for a moment close at hand,
Caught in some league-wide whirlpool of the sea,
The mighty galleons crowded and towered and plunged
Above him on the huge o'erhanging billows,
As if to crash down on his decks; the next,
A mile of ravening sea had swept between
Each of those wind-whipt straws and they were gone,
With all their tiny shrivelling scrolls of sail,
Through roaring deserts of embattled death,
Where like a hundred thousand chariots charged
With lightnings and with thunders, the great deep
Hurled them away to the North. From sky to sky
One blanching bursting storm of infinite seas
Followed them, broad white cataracts, hills that grasped
With struggling Titan hands at reeling heavens,
And roared their doom-fraught greetings from Cape Wrath
Round to the Bloody Foreland.
There should the yeast
Of foam receive the purple of many kings,
And the grim gulfs devour the blood-bought gold
Of Aztecs and of Incas, and the reefs,
League after league, bristle with mangled spars,
And all along their coasts the murderous kerns
Of Catholic Ireland strip the gorgeous silks
And chains and jewel-encrusted crucifixes
From thousands dead, and slaughter thousands more
With gallow-glass axes as they blindly crept
Forth from the surf and jagged rocks to seek
Pity of their own creed.
To meet that doom
Drake watched their sails go shrivelling, till the last
Flicker of spars vanished as a skeleton leaf
Upon the blasts of winter, and there was nought
But one wide wilderness of splendour and gloom
Under the northern clouds.
"Not unto us,"
Cried Drake, "not unto us—but unto Him

Who made the sea, belongs our England now!
Pray God that heart and mind and soul we prove
Worthy among the nations of this hour
And this great victory, whose ocean fame
Shall wash the world with thunder till that day
When there is no more sea, and the strong cliffs
Pass like a smoke, and the last peal of it
Sounds thro' the trumpet."
So, with close-hauled sails,
Over the rolling triumph of the deep,
Lifting their hearts to heaven, they turned back home.

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

AND OTHER POEMS.

MIST IN THE VALLEY.

I.

Mist in the valley, weeping mist
Beset my homeward way.
No gleam of rose or amethyst
Hallowed the parting day;
A shroud, a shroud of awful gray
Wrapped every woodland brow,
And drooped in crumbling disarray
Around each wintry bough.

II.

And closer round me now it clung
Until I scarce could see
The stealthy pathway over-hung
By silent tree and tree
Which floated in that mystery
As—poised in waveless deeps—
Branching in worlds below the sea,
The gray sea-forest sleeps.

III.

Mist in the valley, mist no less
Within my groping mind!
The stile swam out: a wilderness
Rolled round it, gray and blind.
A yard in front, a yard behind,
So strait my world was grown,
I stooped to win once more some kind
Glimmer of twig or stone.

IV.

I crossed and lost the friendly stile
And listened. Never a sound
Came to me. Mile on mile on mile
It seemed the world around
Beneath some infinite sea lay drowned
With all that e'er drew breath;
Whilst I, alone, had strangely found
A moment's life in death.

V.

A universe of lifeless gray
Oppressed me overhead.
Below, a yard of clinging clay
With rotting foliage red
Glimmered. The stillness of the dead,
Hark!—was it broken now
By the slow drip of tears that bled
From hidden heart or bough.

VI.

Mist in the valley, mist no less
That muffled every cry
Across the soul's gray wilderness
Where faith lay down to die;

Buried beyond all hope was I,
Hope had no meaning there:
A yard above my head the sky
Could only mock at prayer.

VII.

E'en as I groped along, the gloom
Suddenly shook at my feet!
O, strangely as from a rending tomb
In resurrection, sweet
Swift wings tumultuously beat
Away! I paused to hark—
O, birds of thought, too fair, too fleet
To follow across the dark!

VIII.

Yet, like a madman's dream, there came
One fair swift flash to me
Of distances, of streets a-flame
With joy and agony,
And further yet, a moon-lit sea
Foaming across its bars,
And further yet, the infinity
Of wheeling suns and stars,

IX.

And further yet . . . O, mist of suns,
I grope amidst your light,
O, further yet, what vast response
From what transcendent height?
Wild wings that burst thro' death's dim night
I can but pause and hark;
For O, ye are too swift, too white,
To follow across the dark!

x.

Mist in the valley, yet I saw,
And in my soul I knew
The gleaming City whence I draw
The strength that then I drew,
My misty pathway to pursue
With steady pulse and breath
Through these dim forest-ways of dew
And darkness, life and death.

A SONG OF THE PLOUGH.

I.

(*Morning.*)

Idle, comfortless, bare,
The broad bleak acres lie:
The ploughman guides the sharp ploughshare
Steadily nigh.

The big plough-horses lift
And climb from the marge of the sea,
And the clouds of their breath on the clear wind drift
Over the fallow lea.

Streaming up with the yoke,
Brown as the sweet-smelling loam,
Thro' a sun-swept smother of sweat and smoke
The two great horses come.

Up thro' the raw cold morn
They trample and drag and swing;
And my dreams are waving with ungrown corn
In a far-off spring.

It is my soul lies bare
Between the hills and the sea:
Come, ploughman Life, with thy sharp ploughshare,
And plough the field for me.

II.

(*Evening.*)

Over the darkening plain
As the stars regain the sky,
Steals the chime of an unseen rein
Steadily nigh.

Lost in the deepening red
The sea has forgotten the shore:
The great dark steeds with their muffled tread
Draw near once more.

To the furrow's end they sweep
Like a sombre wave of the sea,
Lifting its crest to challenge the deep
Hush of Eternity.

Still for a moment they stand,
Massed on the sun's red death,
A surge of bronze, too great, too grand,
To endure for more than a breath.

Only the billow and stream
Of muscle and flank and mane
Like darkling mountain-cataracts gleam
Gripped in a Titan's rein.

Once more from the furrow's end
They wheel to the fallow lea,
And down the muffled slope descend
To the sleeping sea.

And the fibrous knots of clay,
And the sun-dried clots of earth
Cleave, and the sunset cloaks the gray
Waste and the stony dearth!

O, broad and dusky and sweet,
The sunset covers the weald;
But my dreams are waving with golden wheat
In a still strange field.

My soul, my soul lies bare,
Between the hills and the sea;
Come, ploughman Death, with thy sharp ploughshare,
And plough the field for me.

THE BANNER.

Who in the gorgeous vanguard of the years
With wingéd helmet glistens, let him hold
Ere he pluck down this banner, crying "It bears
An old device"; for, though it seem the old,

It is the new! No rent shroud of the past,
But its transfigured spirit that still shines
Triumphantly before the foremost lines,
Even from the first prophesying the last.

And whoso dreams to pluck it down shall stand
Bewildered, while the great host thunders by;
And he shall show the rent shroud in his hand
And "Lo, I lead the van!" he still shall cry;

While leagues away, the spirit-banner shines
Rushing in triumph before the foremost lines.

RANK AND FILE.

I.

Drum-taps! Drum-taps! Who is it marching,
Marching past in the night? Ah, hark,
Draw your curtains aside and see
Endless ranks of the stars o'er-arching
Endless ranks of an army marching,
Marching out of the measureless dark,
Marching away to Eternity.

II.

See the gleam of the white sad faces
Moving steadily, row on row,
Marching away to their hopeless wars:
Drum-taps, drum-taps, where are they marching?
Terrible, beautiful, human faces,
Common as dirt, but softer than snow,
Coarser than clay, but calm as the stars.

III.

Is it the last rank readily, steadily
Swinging away to the unknown doom?
Ere you can think it, the drum-taps beat
Louder, and here they come marching, marching,
Great new level locked ranks of them readily
Steadily swinging out of the gloom,
Marching endlessly down the street.

IV.

Unregarded imperial regiments
White from the roaring intricate places
Deep in the maw of the world's machine,
Well content, they are marching, marching,
Unregarded imperial regiments,
Ay, and there are those terrible faces
Great world-heroes that might have been.

V.

Hints and facets of One—the Eternal,
Faces of grief, compassion and pain,
Faces of hunger, faces of stone,
Faces of love and of labour, marching,
Changing facets of One—the Eternal,
Streaming up thro' the wind and the rain,
All together and each alone.

VI.

You that doubt of the world's one Passion,
You for whose science the stars are a-stray,
Hark—to their orderly thunder-tread!
These, in the night, with the stars are marching
One to the end of the world's one Passion!
You that have taken their Master away,
Where have you laid Him, living or dead?

VII.

You whose laws have hidden the One Law,
You whose searchings obscure the goal,
You whose systems from chaos begun,
Chance-born, order-less, hark, they are marching,
Hearts and tides and stars to the One Law,
Measured and orderly, rhythmical, whole,
Multitudinous, welded and one.

VIII.

Split your threads of the seamless purple,
Round you marches the world-wide host,
Round your skies is the marching sky,
Out in the night there's an army marching,
Clothed with the night's own seamless purple,
Making death for the King their boast,
Marching straight to Eternity.

IX.

What do you know of the shot-riddled banners
Royally surging out of the gloom,
You whose denials their souls despise?
Out in the night they are marching, marching!
Treasure your wisdom, and leave them their banners!
Then—when you follow them down to the tomb
Pray for one glimpse of the faith in their eyes.

X.

Pray for one gleam of the white sad faces,
Moving steadily, row on row,
Marching away to their hopeless wars
Doomed to be trodden like dung, but marching,
Terrible, beautiful human faces,
Common as dirt, but softer than snow,
Coarser than clay, but calm as the stars.

XI.

What of the end? Will your knowledge escape it?
What of the end of their dumb dark tears?
You who mock at their faith and sing,
Look, for their ragged old banners are marching
Down to the end—will your knowledge escape it?—
Down to the end of a few brief years!
What should they care for the wisdom you bring.

XII.

Count as they pass, their hundreds, thousands,
Millions, marching away to a doom
Younger than London, older than Tyre!
Drum-taps, drum-taps, where are they marching,
Regiments, nations, empires, marching?
Down thro' the jaws of a world-wide tomb,
Doomed or ever they sprang from the mire!

XIII.

Doomed to be shovelled like dung to the midden,
Trodden and kneaded as clay in the road,
Father and little one, lover and friend,
Out in the night they are marching, marching,
Doomed to be shovelled like dung to the midden,
Bodies that bowed beneath Christ's own load,
Love that—marched to the self-same end.

XIV.

What of the end?—O, not of your glory,
Not of your wealth or your fame that will live
Half as long as this pellet of dust!—
Out in the night there's an army marching,
Nameless, noteless, empty of glory,
Ready to suffer and die and forgive,
Marching onward in simple trust,

XV.

Wearing their poor little toy love-tokens
Under the march of the terrible skies!
Is it a jest for a God to play?—
Whose is the jest of these millions marching,
Wearing their poor little toy love-tokens,
Waving their voicelessly grand good-byes,
Secretly trying, sometimes, to pray.

XVI.

Dare you dream their trust in Eternity
Broken, O you to whom prayers are vain,
You who dream that their God is dead?
Take your answer—these millions marching
Out of Eternity, into Eternity,
These that smiled "We shall meet again,"
Even as the life from their loved one fled.

XVII.

This is the answer, not of the sages,
Not of the loves that are ready to part,
Ready to find their oblivion sweet!
Out in the night there's an army marching,
Men that have toiled thro' the endless ages,
Men of the pit and the desk and the mart,
Men that remember, the men in the street,

XVIII.

These that into the gloom of Eternity
Stream thro' the dream of this lamp-starred town
London, an army of clouds to-night!
These that of old came marching, marching,
Out of the terrible gloom of Eternity,
Bowing their heads at Rameses' frown,
Streaming away thro' Babylon's light;

XIX.

These that swept at the sound of the trumpet
Out thro' the night like gonfaloned clouds,
Exiled hosts when the world was Rome,
Tossing their tattered old eagles, marching
Down to sleep till the great last trumpet,
London, Nineveh, rend your shrouds,
Rally the legions and lead them home,

XX.

Lead them home with their glorious faces
Moving steadily, row on row
Marching up from the end of wars,
Out of the Valley of Shadows, marching,
Terrible, beautiful, human faces,
Common as dirt, but softer than snow,
Coarser than clay, but calm as the stars,

XXI.

Marching out of the endless ages,
Marching out of the dawn of time,
Endless columns of unknown men,
Endless ranks of the stars o'er-arching,
Endless ranks of an army marching
Numberless out of the numberless ages.
Men out of every race and clime,
Marching steadily, now as then.

THE SKY-LARK CAGED.

I.

Beat, little breast, against the wires,
Strive, little wings and misted eyes.
Which one wild gleam of memory fires
Beseeching still the unfettered skies,
Whither at dewy dawn you sprang
Quivering with joy from this dark earth and sang.

II.

And still you sing—your narrow cage
Shall set at least your music free!
Its rapturous wings in glorious rage
Mount and are lost in liberty,
While those who caged you creep on earth
Blind prisoners from the hour that gave them birth.

III.

Sing! The great City surges round.
Blinded with light, thou canst not know.
Dream! 'Tis the fir-woods' windy sound
Rolling a psalm of praise below.
Sing, o'er the bitter dust and shame,
And touch us with thine own transcendent flame.

IV.

Sing, o'er the City dust and slime;
Sing, o'er the squalor and the gold,
The greed that darkens earth with crime,
The spirits that are bought and sold.
O, shower the healing notes like rain,
And lift us to the height of grief again.

V.

Sing! The same music swells your breast,
And the wild notes are still as sweet
As when above the fragrant nest
And the wide billowing fields of wheat
You soared and sang the livelong day,
And in the light of heaven dissolved away.

VI.

The light of heaven! Is it not here?
One rapture, one ecstatic joy,
One passion, one sublime despair,
One grief which nothing can destroy,
You—though your dying eyes are wet
Remember, 'tis our blunted hearts forget

VII.

Beat, little breast, still beat, still beat,
Strive, misted eyes and tremulous wings;
Swell, little throat, your *Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!*
Thro' which such deathless memory rings:
Better to break your heart and die,
Than, like your gaolers, to forget your sky.

THE LOVERS' FLIGHT.

I.

Come, the dusk is lit with flowers!
  Quietly take this guiding hand:
Little breath to waste is ours
  On the road to lovers' land.
Time is in his dungeon-keep!
  Ah, not thither, lest he hear,
Starting from his old gray sleep,
  Rosy feet upon the stair.

II.

Ah, not thither, lest he heed
  Ere we reach the rusty door!
Nay, the stairways only lead
  Back to his dark world once more:
There's a merrier way we know
  Leading to a lovelier night—
See, your casement all a-glow
  Diamonding the wonder-light.

III.

Fling the flowery lattice wide,
  Let the silken ladder down,
Swiftly to the garden glide
  Glimmering in your long white gown,

Rosy from your pillow, sweet,
Come, unsandalled and divine;
Let the blossoms stain your feet
And the stars behold them shine.

IV.

Swift, our pawing palfreys wait,
And the page—Dan Cupid—frets,
Holding at the garden gate
Reins that chime like castanets,
Bits a-foam with fairy flakes
Flung from seas whence Venus rose:
Come, for Father Time awakes
And the star of morning glows.

V.

Swift—one satin foot shall sway
Half a heart-beat in my hand,
Swing to stirrup and swift away
Down the road to lovers' land:
Ride—the moon is dusky gold,
Ride—our hearts are young and warm,
Ride—the hour is growing old,
And the next may break the charm.

VI.

Swift, ere we that thought the song
Full—for others—of the truth,
We that smiled, contented, strong,
Dowered with endless wealth of youth,
Find that like a summer cloud
Youth indeed has crept away,
Find the robe a clinging shroud
And the hair be-sprent with gray.

VII.

Ride—we'll leave it all behind,
All the turmoil and the tears,
All the mad vindictive blind
Yelping of the heartless years!
Ride—the ringing world 's in chase,
Yet we've slipped old Father Time,
By the love-light in your face
And the jingle of this rhyme.

VIII.

Ride—for still the hunt is loud!
Ride—our steeds can hold their own!
Yours, a satin sea-wave, proud,
Queen, to be your living throne,
Glittering with the foam and fire
Churned from seas whence Venus rose,
Tow'rds the gates of our desire
Gloriously burning flows.

IX.

He, with streaming flanks a-smoke,
Needs no spur of blood-stained steel:
Only that soft thudding stroke
Once, o' the little satin heel,
Drives his mighty heart, your slave,
Bridled with these bells of rhyme,
Onward, like a crested wave
Thundering out of hail of Time.

X.

On, till from a rosy spark
Fairy-small as gleams your hand,
Broadening as we cleave the dark,
Dawn the gates of lovers' land,

Nearing, sweet, till breast and brow
Lifted through the purple night
Catch the deepening glory now
And your eyes the wonder-light.

XI.

E'en as tow'rd your face I lean
Swooping nigh the gates of bliss
I the king and you the queen
Crown each other with a kiss
Riding, soaring like a song
Burn we tow'rds the heaven above,
You the sweet and I the strong
And in both the fire of love.

XII.

Ride—though now the distant chase
Knows that we have slipped old Time,
Lift the love-light of your face,
Shake the bridle of this rhyme.
See, the flowers of night and day
Streaming past on either hand,
Ride into the eternal May,
Ride into the lovers' land.

THE ROCK POOL.

I.

Bright as a fallen fragment of the sky,
Mid shell-encrusted rocks the sea-pool shone,
Glassing the sunset-clouds in its clear heart,
A small enchanted world enwalled apart
In diamond mystery,
Content with its own dreams, its own strict zone
Of urchin woods, its fairy bights and bars,
Its daisy-disked anemones and rose-feathered stars.

II.

Forsaken for a-while by that deep roar
Which works in storm and calm the eternal will,
Drags down the cliffs, bids the great hills go by
And shepherds their multitudinous pageantry,—
Here, on this ebb-tide shore
A jewelled bath of beauty, sparkling still,
The little sea-pool smiled away the sea,
And slept on its own plane of bright tranquillity.

III.

A self-sufficing soul, a pool in trance,
Un-stirred by all the spirit-winds that blow
From o'er the gulfs of change, content, ere yet
On its own crags, which rough peaked limpets fret

The last rich colours glance,
Content to mirror the sea-bird's wings of snow,
Or feel in some small creek, ere sunset fails,
A tiny Nautilus hoist its lovely purple sails;

IV.

And, furrowing into pearl that rosy bar,
Sail its own soul from fairy fringe to fringe,
Lured by the twinkling prey 'twas born to reach
In its own pool, by many an elfin beach
Of jewels, adventuring far
Through the last mirrored cloud and sunset-tinge
And past the rainbow-dripping cave where lies
The dark green pirate-crab at watch with beaded eyes,

V.

Or fringed Medusa floats like light in light,
Medusa, with the loveliest of all fays
Pent in its irised bubble of jellied sheen,
Trailing long ferns of moon-light, shot with green
And crimson rays and white,
Waving ethereal tendrils, ghostly sprays,
Daring the deep, dissolving in the sun,
The vanishing point of life, the light whence life begun,

VI.

Poised between life, light, time, eternity,
So tinged with all, that in its delicate brain
Kindling it as a lamp with her bright wings
Day-long, night-long, young Ariel sits and sings
Echoing the lucid sea,
Listening it echo her own unearthly strain,
Watching through lucid walls the world's rich tide,
One light, one substance with her own, rise and subside.

VII.

And over soft brown woods, limpid, serene,
Puffing its fans the Nautilus went its way,
And from a hundred salt and weedy shelves
Peered little hornéd faces of sea-elves:
The prawn darted, half-seen,
Thro' watery sunlight, like a pale green ray,
And all around, from soft green waving bowers,
Creatures like fruit out-crept from fluted shells like flowers.

VIII.

And, over all, that glowing mirror spread
The splendour of its heaven-reflecting gleams,
A level wealth of tints, calm as the sky
That broods above our own mortality:
The temporal seas had fled,
And ah, what hopes, what fears, what mystic dreams
Could ruffle it now from any deeper deep?
Content in its own bounds it slept a changeless sleep.

IX.

Suddenly, from that heaven beyond belief,
Suddenly, from that world beyond its ken,
Dashing great billows o'er its rosy bars,
Shivering its dreams into a thousand stars,
Flooding each sun-dried reef
With waves of colour, (as once, for mortal men
Bethesda's angel) with blue eyes, wide and wild,
Naked into the pool there stepped a little child.

X.

Her red-gold hair against the far green sea
Blew thickly out: her slender golden form
Shone dark against the richly waning west
As with one hand she splashed her glistening breast,

Then waded up to her knee
And frothed the whole pool into a fairy storm! . . .
So, stooping through our skies, of old, there came
Angels that once could set this world's dark pool a-flame,

XI.

From which the seas of faith have ebbed away,
Leaving the lonely shore too bright, too bare,
While mirrored softly in the smooth wet sand
A deeper sunset sees its blooms expand
But all too phantom-fair,
Between the dark brown rocks and sparkling spray
Where the low ripples pleaded, shrank and sighed,
And tossed a moment's rainbow heavenward ere they died.

XII.

Stoop, starry souls, incline to this dark coast,
Where all too long, too faithlessly, we dream.
Stoop to the world's dark pool, its crags and scars,
Its yellow sands, its rosy harbour-bars,
And soft green wastes that gleam
But with some glorious drifting god-like ghost
Of cloud, some vaguely passionate crimson stain:
Rend the blue waves of heaven, shatter our sleep again!

THE ISLAND HAWK.

(A SONG FOR THE FIRST LAUNCHING OF HIS MAJESTY'S AERIAL NAVY.)

I.

Chorus—

Ships have swept with my conquering name
Over the waves of war,
Swept thro' the Spaniards' thunder and flame
To the splendour of Trafalgar:
On the blistered decks of their great renown,
In the wind of my storm-beat wings,
Hawkins and Hawke went sailing down
To the harbour of deep-sea kings!
By the storm-beat wings of the hawk, the hawk,
Bent beak and pitiless breast,
They clove their way thro' the red sea-fray:
Who wakens me now to the quest?

II.

Hushed are the whimpering winds on the hill,
Dumb is the shrinking plain,
And the songs that enchanted the woods are still
As I shoot to the skies again!
Does the blood grow black on my fierce bent beak,
Does the down still cling to my claw?
Who brightened these eyes for the prey they seek?
Life, I follow thy law!
For I am the hawk, the hawk, the hawk!
Who knoweth my pitiless breast?
Who watcheth me sway in the wild wind's way?
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

III.

As I glide and glide with my peering head,
Or swerve at a puff of smoke,
Who watcheth my wings on the wind outspread,
Here—gone—with an instant stroke?
Who toucheth the glory of life I feel
As I buffet this great glad gale,
Spire and spire to the cloud-world, wheel,
Loosen my wings and sail?
For I am the hawk, the island hawk,
Who knoweth my pitiless breast?
Who watcheth me sway in the sun's bright way?
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

IV.

Had they given me "Cloud-cuckoo-city" to guard
Between mankind and the sky,
Tho' the dew might shine on an April sward,
Iris had ne'er passed by!
Swift as her beautiful wings might be
From the rosy Olympian hill,
Had Epops entrusted the gates to me
Earth were his kingdom still.
For I am the hawk, the archer, the hawk!
Who knoweth my pitiless breast?
Who watcheth me sway in the wild wind's way?
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

V.

My mate in the nest on the high bright tree
Blazing with dawn and dew,
She knoweth the gleam of the world and the glee
As I drop like a bolt from the blue;

She knoweth the fire of the level flight
As I skim, close, close to the ground,
With the long grass lashing my breast and the bright
Dew-drops flashing around.
She watcheth the hawk, the hawk, the hawk
(O, the red-blotched eggs in the nest!)
Watcheth him sway in the sun's bright way;
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

VI.

She builded her nest on the high bright wold,
She was taught in a world afar,
The lore that is only an April old
Yet old as the evening star;
Life of a far off ancient day
In an hour unhooded her eyes;
In the time of the budding of one green spray
She was wise as the stars are wise.
Brown flower of the tree of the hawk, the hawk,
On the old elm's burgeoning breast,
She watcheth me sway in the wild wind's way:
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

VII.

Spirit and sap of the sweet swift Spring,
Fire of our island soul,
Burn in her breast and pulse in her wing
While the endless ages roll;
Avatar—she—of the perilous pride
That plundered the golden West,
Her glance is a sword, but it sweeps too wide
For a rumour to trouble her rest.
She goeth her glorious way, the hawk,
She nurseth her brood alone:
She will not swoop for an owlet's whoop,
She hath calls and cries of her own.

VIII.

There was never a dale in our isle so deep
That her wide wings were not free
To soar to the sovran heights and keep
Sight of the rolling sea:
Is it there, is it here in the rolling skies,
The realm of her future fame?
Look once, look once in her glittering eyes,
Ye shall find her the same, the same.
Up to the skies with the hawk, the hawk,
As it was in the days of old!
Ye shall sail once more, ye shall soar, ye shall soar
To the new-found realms of gold.

IX.

She hath ridden on white Arabian steeds
Thro' the ringing English dells,
For the joy of a great queen, hunting in state,
To the music of golden bells;
A queen's fair fingers have drawn the hood
And tossed her aloft in the blue,
A white hand eager for needless blood;
I hunt for the needs of two.
Yet I am the hawk, the hawk, the hawk!
Who knoweth my pitiless breast?
Who watcheth me sway in the sun's bright way?
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

X.

Who fashioned her wide and splendid eyes
That have stared in the eyes of kings?
With a silken twist she was looped to their wrist:
She has clawed at their jewelled rings!

Who flung her first thro' the crimson dawn
To pluck him a prey from the skies,
When the love-light shone upon lake and lawn
In the valleys of Paradise?
Who fashioned the hawk, the hawk, the hawk,
Bent beak and pitiless breast?
Who watcheth him sway in the wild wind's way?
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

XI.

Is there ever a song in all the world
Shall say how the quest began
With the beak and the wings that have made us kings
And cruel—almost—as man?
The wild wind whimpers across the heath
Where the sad little tufts of blue
And the red-stained gray little feathers of death
Flutter! *Who fashioned us? Who?*
Who fashioned the scimitar wings of the hawk,
Bent beak and arrowy breast?
Who watcheth him sway in the sun's bright way?
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.

XII.

Linnet and woodpecker, red-cap and jay,
Shriek that a doom shall fall
One day, one day, on my pitiless way
From the sky that is over us all;
But the great blue hawk of the heavens above
Fashioned the world for his prey,—
King and queen and hawk and dove,
We shall meet in his clutch that day;
Shall I not welcome him, I, the hawk?
Yea, cry, as they shrink from his claw,
Cry, as I die, to the unknown sky,
Life, I follow thy law!

XIII.

Chorus—

Ships have swept with my conquering name . . .
Over the world and beyond,
Hark! Bellerophon, Marlborough, Thunderer,
Condor, respond!—
On the blistered decks of their dread renown,
In the rush of my storm-beat wings,
Hawkins and Hawke went sailing down
To the glory of deep-sea kings!
By the storm-beat wings of the hawk, the hawk,
Bent beak and pitiless breast,
They clove their way thro' the red sea-fray!
Who wakens me now to the quest.

THE ADMIRAL'S GHOST.

I TELL you a tale to-night
  Which a seaman told to me,
With eyes that gleamed in the lanthorn light
  And a voice as low as the sea.

You could almost hear the stars
  Twinkling up in the sky,
And the old wind woke and moaned in the spars,
  And the same old waves went by,

Singing the same old song
  As ages and ages ago,
While he froze my blood in that deep-sea night
  With the things that he seemed to know.

A bare foot pattered on deck;
  Ropes creaked; then—all grew still,
And he pointed his finger straight in my face
  And growled, as a sea-dog will.

"Do 'ee know who Nelson was?
  That pore little shrivelled form
With the patch on his eye and the pinned-up sleeve
  And a soul like a North Sea storm?

"Ask of the Devonshire men!
  They know, and they'll tell you true;
He wasn't the pore little chawed-up chap
  That Hardy thought he knew.

"He wasn't the man you think!
His patch was a dern disguise!
For he knew that they'd find him out, d'you see,
If they looked him in both his eyes.

"He was twice as big as he seemed;
But his clothes were cunningly made.
He'd both of his hairy arms all right!
The sleeve was a trick of the trade.

"You've heard of sperrits, no doubt;
Well, there's more in the matter than that!
But he wasn't the patch and he wasn't the sleeve,
And he wasn't the laced cocked-hat.

"*Nelson was just—a Ghost!*
You may laugh! But the Devonshire men
They knew that he'd come when England called,
And they know that he'll come again.

"I'll tell you the way it was
(For none of the landsmen know),
And to tell it you right, you must go a-starn
Two hundred years or so.

. . . . . .

"The waves were lapping and slapping
The same as they are to-day;
And Drake lay dying aboard his ship
In Nombre Dios Bay.

"The scent of the foreign flowers
Came floating all around;
'But I'd give my soul for the smell o' the pitch,'
Says he, 'in Plymouth Sound.

"'What shall I do,' he says,
'When the guns begin to roar,
An' England wants me, and me not there
To shatter 'er foes once more?'

"(You've heard what he said, maybe,
But I'll mark you the p'ints again;
For I want you to box your compass right
And get my story plain.)

"'You must take my drum,' he says,
'To the old sea-wall at home;
And if ever you strike that drum,' he says,
'Why, strike me blind, I'll come!

"'If England needs me, dead
Or living, I'll rise that day!
I'll rise from the darkness under the sea
Ten thousand miles away.'

"That's what he said; and he died;
An' his pirates, listenin' roun',
With their crimson doublets and jewelled swords
That flashed as the sun went down,

"They sewed him up in his shroud
With a round-shot top and toe,
To sink him under the salt sharp sea
Where all good seamen go.

"They lowered him down in the deep,
And there in the sunset light
They boomed a broadside over his grave,
As meanin' to say 'Good-night.'

"They sailed away in the dark
To the dear little isle they knew;
And they hung his drum by the old sea-wall
The same as he told them to.

. . . . . .

"Two hundred years went by,
And the guns began to roar,
And England was fighting hard for her life,
As ever she fought of yore.

"'It's only my dead that count,'
She said, as she says to-day;
'It isn't the ships and it isn't the guns
'Ull sweep Trafalgar's Bay.'

"D'you guess who Nelson was?
You may laugh, but it's true as true!
There was more in that pore little chawed-up chap
Than ever his best friend knew.

"The foe was creepin' close,
In the dark, to our white-cliffed isle;
They were ready to leap at England's throat,
When—O, you may smile, you may smile;

"But—ask of the Devonshire men;
For they heard in the dead of night
The roll of a drum, and they saw *him* pass
On a ship all shining white.

"He stretched out his dead cold face
And he sailed in the grand old way!
The fishes had taken an eye and an arm,
But he swept Trafalgar's Bay.

"Nelson—was Francis Drake!
O, what matters the uniform,
Or the patch on your eye or your pinned-up sleeve,
If your soul's like a North Sea storm?"

EDINBURGH.

I.

City of mist and rain and blown grey spaces,
Dashed with wild wet colour and gleam of tears,
Dreaming in Holyrood halls of the passionate faces
Lifted to one Queen's face that has conquered the years,
Are not the halls of thy memory haunted places?
Cometh there not as a moon (where the blood-rust sears
Floors a-flutter of old with silks and laces),
Gliding, a ghostly Queen, thro' a mist of tears?

II.

Proudly here, with a loftier pinnacled splendour,
Throned in his northern Athens, what spells remain
Still on the marble lips of the Wizard, and render
Silent the gazer on glory without a stain!
Here and here, do we whisper, with hearts more tender,
Tusitala wandered thro' mist and rain;
Rainbow-eyed and frail and gallant and slender,
Dreaming of pirate-isles in a jewelled main.

III.

Up the Canongate climbeth, cleft asunder
Raggedly here, with a glimpse of the distant sea
Flashed through a crumbling alley, a glimpse of wonder,
Nay, for the City is throned on Eternity!
Hark! from the soaring castle a cannon's thunder
Closeth an hour for the world and an æon for me,
Gazing at last from the martial heights whereunder
Deathless memories roll to an ageless sea.

IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

THREE long isles of sunset-cloud.
  Poised in an ocean of gold,
Floated away in the west
  As the long train southward rolled;

And through the gleam and shade of the panes,
  While meadow and wood went by,
Across the streaming earth
  We watched the steadfast sky.

Dark before the westward window,
  Heavy and bloated, rolled
The face of a drunken woman
  Nodding against the gold;

Dark before the infinite glory,
  With bleared and leering eyes,
It stupidly lurched and nodded
  Against the tender skies.

What had ye done to her, masters of men,
  That her head should be bowed down thus—
Thus for your golden vespers,
  And deepening angelus?

Dark, besotted, malignant, vacant,
  Slobbering, wrinkled, old,
Weary and wickedly smiling,
  She nodded against the gold.

Pitiful, loathsome, maudlin, lonely,
Her moist, inhuman eyes
Blinked at the flies on the window,
And could not see the skies.

As a beast that turns and returns to a mirror
And will not see its face,
Her eyes rejected the sunset,
Her soul lay dead in its place,

Dead in the furrows and folds of her flesh
As a corpse lies lapped in the shroud:
Silently floated beside her
The isles of sunset-cloud.

What had ye done to her, years upon years,
That her head should be bowed down thus—
Thus for your golden vespers,
And deepening angelus?

Her nails were blackened and split with labour,
Her back was heavily bowed;
Silently floated beside her
The isles of sunset-cloud.

Over their tapering streaks of lilac
In breathless depths afar,
Bright as the tear of an angel
Glittered a lonely star.

While the hills and the streams of the world went past us,
And the long train roared and rolled
Southward, and dusk was falling,
She nodded against the gold.

AN EAST-END COFFEE-STALL.

Down the dark alley a ring of orange light
  Glows. God, what leprous tatters of distress,
  Droppings of misery, rags of Thy loneliness
Quiver and heave like vermin, out of the night!

Like crippled rats, creeping out of the gloom,
  O Life, for one of thy terrible moments there,
  Lit by the little flickering yellow flare,
Faces that mock at life and death and doom,

Faces that long, long since have known the worst,
  Faces of women that have seen the child
  Waste in their arms, and strangely, terribly, smiled
When the dark nipple of death has eased its thirst;

Faces of men that once, though long ago,
  Saw the faint light of hope, though far away,—
  Hope that, at end of some tremendous day,
They yet might reach some life where tears could flow;

Faces of our humanity, ravaged, white,
  Wrenched with old love, old hate, older despair,
  Steal out of vile filth-dropping dens to stare
On that wild monstrance of a naphtha light.

They crowd before the stall's bright altar-rail,
  Grotesque, and sacred, for that light's brief span,
  And all the shuddering darkness cries, "All hail,
Daughters and Sons of Man!"

See, see, once more, though all their souls be dead,
They hold it up, triumphantly hold it up,
They feel, they warm their hands upon the Cup;
Their crapulous hands, their claw-like hands break Bread!

See, with lean faces rapturously a-glow
For a brief while they dream and munch and drink;
Then, one by one, once more, silently slink
Back, back into the gulfing mist. They go,

One by one, out of the ring of light!
They creep, like crippled rats, into the gloom,
Into the fogs of life and death and doom,
Into the night, the immeasurable night.

RED OF THE DAWN.

I.

THE Dawn peered in with blood-shot eyes
Pressed close against the cracked old pane.
The garret slept: the slow sad rain
Had ceased: grey fogs obscured the skies;
But Dawn peered in with haggard eyes.

II.

All as last night? The three-legged chair,
The bare walls and the tattered bed,
All!—but for those wild flakes of red
(And Dawn, perhaps, had splashed them there!)
Round the bare walls, the bed, the chair.

III.

'Twas here, last night, when winds were loud,
A ragged singing-girl, she came
Out of the tavern's glare and shame,
With some few pence—for she was proud—
Came home to sleep, when winds were loud.

IV.

And she sleeps well; for she was tired!
That huddled shape beneath the sheet
With knees up-drawn, no wind or sleet
Can wake her now! Sleep she desired;
And she sleeps well, for she was tired.

V.

And there was one that followed her
With some unhappy curse called "love":
Last night, though winds beat loud above,
She shrank! Hark, on the creaking stair,
What stealthy footstep followed her?

VI.

But now the Curse, it seemed, had gone!
The small tin-box, wherein she hid
Old childish treasures, had burst its lid,
Dawn kissed her doll's cracked face. It shone
Red-smeared, but laughing—*the Curse is gone.*

VII.

So she sleeps well: she does not move;
And on the wall, the chair, the bed,
Is it the Dawn that splashes red,
High as the text where *God is Love*
Hangs o'er her head? She does not move.

VIII.

The clock dictates its old refrain:
All else is quiet; or, far away,
Shaking the world with new-born day,
There thunders past some mighty train:
The clock dictates its old refrain.

IX.

The Dawn peers in with blood-shot eyes:
The crust, the broken cup are there!
She does not rise yet to prepare
Her scanty meal. God does not rise
And pluck the blood-stained sheet from her;
But Dawn peers in with haggard eyes.

THE DREAM-CHILD'S INVITATION.

I.

Once upon a time!—Ah, now the light is burning dimly,
Peterkin is here again: he wants another tale!
Don't you hear him whispering—*The wind is in the chimley,*
The ottoman's a treasure-ship, we'll all set sail?

II.

All set sail? No, the wind is very loud to-night:
The darkness on the waters is much deeper than of yore,
Yet I wonder—hark, he whispers—if the little streets are still as bright
In old Japan, in old Japan, that happy haunted shore.

III.

I wonder—hush, he whispers—if perhaps the world will wake again
When Christmas brings the stories back from where the skies are blue,
Where clouds are scattering diamonds down on every cottage window-pane,
And every boy's a fairy prince, and every tale is true.

IV.

There the sword Excalibur is thrust into the dragon's throat,
Evil there is evil, black is black, and white is white:
There the child triumphant hurls the villain spluttering into the moat;
There the captured princess only waits the peerless knight.

V.

Fairyland is gleaming there beyond the Sherwood Forest trees,
There the City of the Clouds has anchored on the plain
All her misty vistas and slumber-rosy palaces
(*Shall we not, ah, shall we not, wander there again?*)

VI.

"Happy ever after" there, the lights of home a welcome fling
Softly thro' the darkness as the star that shone of old,
Softly over Bethlehem and o'er the little cradled King
Whom the sages worshipped with their frankincense and gold.

VII.

Once upon a time—perhaps a hundred thousand years ago—
Whisper to me, Peterkin, I have forgotten when!
Once upon a time there was a way, a way we used to know
For stealing off at twilight from the weary ways of men.

VIII.

Whisper it, O whisper it—the way, the way is all I need!
All the heart and will are here and all the deep desire!
Once upon a time—ah, now the light is drawing near indeed,
I see the fairy faces flush to roses round the fire.

IX.

Once upon a time—the little lips are on my cheek again,
Little fairy fingers clasped and clinging draw me nigh,
Dreams, no more than dreams, but they unloose the weary prisoner's chain
And lead him from his dungeon! "What's a thousand years?" they cry.

X.

A thousand years, a thousand years, a little drifting dream ago,
All of us were hunting with a band of merry men,
The skies were blue, the boughs were green, the clouds were crisping isles of snow . . .
. . . So Robin blew his bugle, and the Now became the Then.

THE TRAMP TRANSFIGURED.

(AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF A CORN-FLOWER MILLIONAIRE.)

I.

ALL the way to Fairyland across the thyme and heather,
Round a little bank of fern that rustled on the sky,
Me and stick and bundle, sir, we jogged along together,—
(Changeable the weather? Well—it aint all pie!)
Just about the sunset—Won't you listen to my story?—
Look at me! I'm only rags and tatters to your eye!
Sir, that blooming sunset crowned this battered hat with glory!
Me that was a crawling worm became a butterfly—
(Aint it hot and dry?
Thank you, sir, thank you, sir!) a blooming butterfly.

II.

Well, it happened this way! I was lying loose and lazy,
Just as of a Sunday, you yourself might think no shame,
Puffing little clouds of smoke, and picking at a daisy,
Dreaming of your dinner, p'raps, or wishful for the same:
Suddenly, around that ferny bank there slowly waddled—
Slowly as the finger of a clock her shadow came—
Slowly as a tortoise down that winding path she toddled,
Leaning on a crookéd staff, a poor old crookéd dame,
Limping, but not lame,
Tick, tack, tick, tack, a poor old crookéd dame.

III.

Slowly did I say, sir? Well, you've heard that funny fable
Consekint the tortoise and the race it give an 'are?
This was curiouser than that! At first I wasn't able
Quite to size the memory up that bristled thro' my hair:
Suddenly, I'd got it, with a nasty shivery feeling,
While she walked and walked and yet was not a bit more near,—
Sir, it was the tread-mill earth beneath her feet a-wheeling
Faster than her feet could trot to heaven or anywhere,
Earth's revolvin' stair
Wheeling, while my wayside clump was kind of anchored there.

IV.

Tick, tack, tick, tack, and just a little nearer,
Inch and 'arf an inch she went, but never gained a yard:
Quiet as a fox I lay; I didn't wish to scare 'er,
Watching thro' the ferns, and thinking "What a rum old card!"
Both her wrinkled tortoise eyes with yellow resin oozing,
Both her poor old bony hands were red and seamed and scarred!
Lord, I felt as if myself was in a public boozing,
While my own old woman went about and scrubbed and charred!
Lord, it seemed so hard!
Tick, tack, tick, tack, she never gained a yard.

V.

Yus, and there in front of her—I hadn't seen it rightly—
Lurked that little finger-post to point another road,
Just a tiny path of poppies twisting infi-nite-ly
Through the whispering seas of wheat, a scarlet thread that showed

White with ox-eye daisies here and there and chalky cobbles,
Blue with waving corn-flowers: far and far away it glowed,
Winding into heaven, I thinks; but, Lord, the way she hobbles,
Lord, she'll never reach it, for she bears too great a load;
Yus, and then I knowed,
If she did, she couldn't, for the board was marked *No Road.*

VI.

Tick, tack, tick, tack, I couldn't wait no longer!
Up I gets and bows polite and pleasant as a toff—
"Arternoon," I says, "I'm glad your boots are going stronger;
Only thing I'm dreading is your feet 'ull both come off."
Tick, tack, tick, tack, she didn't stop to answer,
"Arternoon," she says, and sort o' chokes a little cough,
"I must get to Piddinghoe to-morrow if I can, sir!"
"Demme, my good woman! Haw! Don't think I mean to loff,"
Says I, like a toff,
"Where d'you mean to sleep to-night? God made this grass for go'ff."

VII.

Tick, tack, tick, tack, and smilingly she eyed me
(Dreadful the low cunning of these creechars, don't you think?)
"That's all right! The weather's bright. Them bushes there 'ull hide me.
Don't the gorse smell nice?" I felt my derned old eyelids blink!
"Supper? I've a crust of bread, a big one, and a bottle,"
(Just as I expected! Ah, these creechars always drink!)

"Sugar and water and half a pinch of tea to rinse my throttle,
Then I'll curl up cosy!"—"If you're cotched it means the clink!"
—"Yus, but don't you think
If a star should see me, God 'ull tell that star to wink?"

VIII.

"Now, look here," I says, "I don't know what your blooming age is!"
"Three-score years and five," she says, "that's five more years to go
Tick, tack, tick, tack, before I gets my wages!"
"Wages all be damned," I says, "there's one thing that I know—
Gals that stay out late o' nights are sure to meet wi' sorrow.
Speaking as a toff," I says, "it isn't *comme il faut!*
Tell me why you want to get to Piddinghoe to-morrow."—
"That was where my son worked, twenty years ago!"—
"Twenty years ago?
Never wrote? May still be there? Remember you?
. . . Just so!"

IX.

Yus, it was a drama; but she weren't my long-lost parent!
Tick, tack, tick, tack, she trotted all the while,
Never getting forrarder, and not the least aware on't,
Though I stood beside her with a sort of silly smile
Stock still! *Tick, tack!* This blooming world's a bubble:
There I stood and stared at it, mile on flowery mile,
Chasing o' the sunset.—"Gals are sure to meet wi' trouble
Staying out o' nights," I says, once more, and tries to smile,
"Come, that aint your style,
Here's a shilling, mother, for to-day I've made my pile!"

X.

Yus, a dozen coppers, all my capital, it fled, sir,
Representin' twelve bokays that cost me nothink each,
Twelve bokays o' corn-flowers blue that grew beside my bed, sir,
That same day, at sunrise, when the sky was like a peach:
Easy as a poet's dreams they blossomed round my head, sir,
All I had to do was just to lift my hand and reach:
So, upon the roaring waves I cast my blooming bread, sir,
Bread I'd earned with nose-gays on the bare-foot Brighton beach,
Nose-gays *and* a speech,
All about the bright blue eyes they matched on Brighton Beach.

XI.

Still, you've only got to hear the bankers on the budget,
Then you'll know the giving game is hardly "high finance";
Which no more it wasn't for that poor old dame to trudge it,
Tick, *tack*, *tick*, *tack*, on such a devil's dance:
Crumbs, it took me quite aback to see her stop so humble,
Casting up into my face a sort of shiny glance,
Bless you, *bless you*, that was what I thought I heard her mumble,
Lord, a prayer for poor old Bill, a rummy sort of chance!
Crumbs, that shiny glance
Kinder made me king of all the sky from here to France.

XII.

Tick, tack, tick, tack, but now she toddled faster:
Soon she'd reach the little twisted by-way through the wheat.
"Look 'ee here," I says, "young woman, don't you court disaster!
Peepin' through yon poppies there's a cottage trim and neat,
White as chalk and sweet as turf: wot price a bed for sorrow,
Sprigs of lavender between the pillow and the sheet?"
"No," she says, "I've got to get to Piddinghoe to-morrow!
P'raps they'd tell the work'us! And I've lashings here to eat:
Don't the gorse smell sweet?" . . .
Well, I turned and left her plodding on beside the wheat.

XIII.

Every cent I'd given her like a hero in a story;
Yet, alone with leagues of wheat I seemed to grow aware
Solomon himself, arrayed in all his golden glory,
Couldn't vie with Me, the corn-flower king, the millionaire!
How to cash those bright blue cheques that night? My trouser pockets
Jingled sudden! Six more pennies, crept from James knew where!
Crumbs! I hurried back with eyes just bulging from their sockets,
Pushed 'em in the old dame's fist and listened for the prayer,
Shamming not to care,
Bill—the blarsted chicken-thief, the corn-flower millionaire.

XIV.

Tick, tack, tick, tack, and faster yet she clattered!
Ay, she'd almost gained a yard! I left her once again.
Feeling very warm inside and sort of 'ighly flattered,
On I plodded, all alone, with hay-stacks in my brain.
Suddenly, with *chink—chink—chink,* the old sweet jingle
Startled me! 'Twas THRUPPENCE MORE! three coppers round and plain!
Lord, temptation struck me and I felt my gullet tingle.
Then—I hurried back beside them seas of golden grain:
No, I can't explain;
There I thrust 'em in her fist, and left her once again.

XV.

Tinkle-chink! THREE HA'PENCE! If the vulgar fractions followed,
Big fleas have little fleas! It flashed upon me there,—
Like the snakes of Pharaoh which the snakes of Moses swallowed
All the world was playing at the tortoise and the hare:
Half the smallest atom is—my soul was getting tipsy—
Heaven is one big circle and the centre's everywhere,
Yus, and that old woman was an angel and a gipsy,
Yus, and Bill, the chicken-thief, the corn-flower millionaire,
Shamming not to care,
What was he? A seraph on the misty rainbow-stair!

XVI.

Don't you make no doubt of it! The deeper that you look, sir,
All your ancient poets tell you just the same as me,—
What about old Ovid and his most indecent book, sir,
Morphosizing females into flower and star and tree?

What about old Proteus and his 'ighly curious 'abits,
Mixing of his old grey beard into the old grey sea?
What about old Darwin and the hat that brought forth rabbits,
Mud and slime that growed into the pomp of Ninevey?
What if there should be
One great Power beneath it all, one God in you and me?

XVII.

Anyway, it seemed to me I'd struck the world's pump-handle!
"Back with that three ha'pence, Bill," I mutters, "or you're lost."
Back I hurries thro' the dusk where, shining like a candle,
Pale before the sunset stood that fairy finger-post.
Sir, she wasn't there! I'd struck the place where all roads crost,
All the roads in all the world.
She couldn't yet have trotted
Even to the . . . Hist! a stealthy step behind? A ghost?
Swish! A flying noose had caught me round the neck!
Garotted!
Back I staggered, clutching at the moonbeams, yus, almost
Throttled! Sir, I boast
Bill is tough, but . . . when it comes to throttling by a ghost!

. . . . . .

XVIII.

Winged like a butterfly, tall and slender
Out It steps with the rope on its arm.
"Crumbs," I says, "all right! I surrender!
When have I crossed you or done you harm?

Ef you're a sperrit," I says, "O, crikey,
Ef you're a sperrit, get hence, vamoose!"
Sweet as music, she spoke—"I'm Psyche!"—
Choking me still with her silken noose.

XIX.

Straight at the word from the ferns and blossoms
Fretting the moon-rise over the downs,
Little blue wings and little white bosoms,
Little white faces with golden crowns,
Peeped, and the colours came twinkling round me,
Laughed, and the turf grew purple with thyme,
Danced, and the sweet crushed scents nigh drowned me,
Sang, and the hare-bells rang in chime.

XX.

All around me, gliding and gleaming,
Fair as a fallen sunset-sky,
Butterfly wings came drifting, dreaming,
Clouds of the little folk clustered nigh,
Little white hands like pearls uplifted
Cords of silk in shimmering skeins,
Cast them about me and dreamily drifted
Winding me round with their soft warm chains.

XXI.

Round and round me they dizzily floated,
Binding me faster with every turn:
Crumbs, my pals would have grinned and gloated
Watching me over that fringe of fern,
Bill, with his battered old hat outstanding
Black as a foam-swept rock to the moon,
Bill, like a rainbow of silks expanding
Into a beautiful big cocoon,—

XXII.

Big as a cloud, though his hat still crowned him,
Yus, and his old boots bulged below:
Seas of colour went shimmering round him,
Dancing, glimmering, glancing, a-glow!
Bill knew well what them elves were at, sir,—
Aint you an en-to-mol-o-gist?
Well, despite of his old black hat, sir,
Bill was *becoming—a chrysalist.*

* * * * * * *

XXIII.

Muffled, smothered in a sea of emerald and opal,
Down a dazzling gulf of dreams I sank and sank away,
Wound about with twenty thousand yards of silken rope, all
Shimmering into crimson, glimmering into gray,
Drowsing, waking, living, dying, just as you regards it,
Buried in a sunset-cloud, or cloud of breaking day,
'Cording as from East or West yourself might look to-wards it,
Losing, gaining, lost in darkness, raggéd, grimy, gay,
'And-cuffed, not to say
Gagged, but both my shoulders budding, sprouting white as May.

XXIV.

Sprouting like the milky buds o' hawthorn in the night-time,
Pouting like the snowy buds o' roses in July,
Spreading in my chrysalist and waiting for the right time,
When—I thought—they'd bust to wings and Bill would rise and fly,

Tick, tack, tick, tack, as if it came in answer,
Sweeping o'er my head again the tide o' dreams went by,—
I must get to Piddinghoe to-morrow if I can, sir,
Tick, tack, a crackle in my chrysalist, a cry!
Then the warm blue sky
Bust the shell, and out crept Bill—a blooming butterfly

. . . . . .

XXV.

Blue as a corn-flower, blazed the zenith: the deepening East like a scarlet poppy
Burned while, dazzled with golden bloom, white clouds like daisies, green seas like wheat,
Gripping the sign-post, first, I climbs, to sun my wings, which were wrinkled and floppy,
Spreading 'em white o'er the words *No Road*, and hanging fast by my six black feet.

XXVI.

Still on my head was the battered old beaver, but through it my clubbed antennæ slanted,
("Feelers" yourself would probably call 'em) my battered old boots were hardly seen
Under the golden fluff of the tail! It was Bill, sir, Bill, though highly enchanted,
Spreading his beautiful snow-white pinions, tipped with orange, and veined with green.

XXVII.

Yus, old Bill was an Orange-tip, a spirit in glory, a blooming Psyche!
New, it was new from East to West this rummy old world that I dreamed I knew,

How can I tell you the things that I saw with my—what
shall *I* call 'em?—"feelers?"—O, crikey,
"FEELERS?" You know how the man born blind
described such colours as scarlet or blue.

XXVIII.

"Scarlet," he says, "is the sound of a trumpet, blue is a
flute," for he hasn't a notion!
No, nor nobody living on earth can tell it him plain, if
he hasn't the sight!
That's how it stands with ragged old Bill, a-drift and
a-dream on a measureless ocean,
Gifted wi' fifteen new-born senses, and seeing you blind
to their new strange light.

XXIX.

How can I tell you? Sir, you must wait, till you die like
Bill, ere you understand it!
Only—I saw—the same as a bee that strikes to his hive
ten leagues away—
Straight as a die, while I winked and blinked on that sun-
warmed wood and my wings expanded
(Whistler drawings that men call wings)—I saw—and I
flew—that's all I can say.

XXX.

Flew over leagues of whispering wonder, fairy forests and
flowery palaces,
Love-lorn casements, delicate kingdoms, beautiful flaming
thoughts of—Him;
Feasts of a million blue-mailed angels lifting their honey-
and-wine-brimmed chalices,
Throned upon clouds—(which you'd call white clover)
down to the world's most rosiest rim.

XXXI.

New and new and new and new, the white o' the cliffs and the wind in the heather,
Yus, and the sea-gulls flying like flakes of the sea that flashed to the new-born day,
Song, song, song, song, quivering up in the wild blue weather,
Thousands of seraphim singing together, and me just flying and—*knowing my way.*

XXXII.

Straight as a die to Piddinghoe's dolphin, and there I drops in a cottage garden,
There, on a sun-warmed window-sill, I winks and peeps, for the window was wide!
Crumbs, he was there and fast in her arms and a-begging his poor old mother's pardon,
There with his lips on her old gray hair, and her head on his breast while she laughed and cried,—

XXXIII.

"*One and nine-pence that old tramp gave me, or else I should never have reached you, sonny,*
Never, and you just leaving the village to-day and meaning to cross the sea,
One and nine-pence he gave me, I paid for the farmer's lift with half o' the money!
Here's the ten-pence halfpenny, sonny, 'twill pay for our little 'ouse-warming tea."

. . . . . .

XXXIV.

Tick, tack, tick, tack, out into the garden
Toddles that old Fairy with his arm about her—so,
Cuddling of her still, and still a-begging of her pardon,
While she says "I wish the corn-flower king could only know!
Bless him, bless him, once again," she says and softly gazes
Up to heaven, a-smiling in her mutch as white as snow,
All among her gilly-flowers and stocks and double daisies,
Mignonette, forget-me-not, . . . *Twenty years ago,*
All a rosy glow,
This is how it was, she said, *Twenty years ago.*

. . . . . .

XXXV.

Once again I seemed to wake, the vision it had fled, sir,
There I lay upon the downs: the sky was like a peach;
Yus, with twelve bokays of corn-flowers blue beside my bed, sir,
More than usual 'andsome, so they'd bring me twopence each.
Easy as a poet's dreams they blossomed round my head, sir,
All I had to do was just to lift my hand and reach,
Tie 'em with a bit of string, and earn my blooming bread, sir,
Selling little nose-gays on the bare-foot Brighton beach,
Nose-gays *and* a speech,
All about the bright blue eyes they matched on Brighton beach.

XXXVI.

Overhead the singing lark and underfoot the heather,
Far and blue in front of us the unplumbed sky,
Me and stick and bundle, O, we jogs along together,
(Changeable the weather? Well, it aint all pie!)

Weather's like a woman, sir, and if she wants to quarrel,
If her eyes begin to flash and hair begins to fly,
You've to wait a little, then—the story has a moral—
Aint the sunny kisses all the sweeter by and bye?—
(Crumbs, it's 'ot and dry!
Thank you, sir! Thank you, sir!) the sweeter by and bye.

XXXVII.

So the world's my sweetheart and I sort of want to squeeze 'er.
Toffs 'ull get no chance of heaven, take 'em in the lump!
Never laid in hay-fields when the dawn came over-sea, sir?
Guess it's true that story 'bout the needle and the hump!
Never crept into a stack because the wind was blowing,
Hollered out a nest and closed the door-way with a clump,
Laid and heard the whisper of the silence, growing, growing,
Watched a thousand wheeling stars and wondered if they'd bump?
What I say would stump
Joshua! But I've done it, sir. Don't think I'm off my chump.

XXXVIII.

If you try and lay, sir, with your face turned up to wonder,
Up to twenty million miles of stars that roll like one,
Right across to God knows where, and you just huddled under
Like a little beetle with no business of his own,
There you'd hear—like growing grass—a funny silent sound, sir,
Mixed with curious crackles in a steady undertone,
Just the sound of twenty billion stars a-going round, sir,
Yus, and you beneath 'em like a wise old ant, alone,
Ant upon a stone,
Waving of his antlers, on the Sussex downs, alone.

ON THE DOWNS.

WIDE-EYED our childhood roamed the world
Knee-deep in blowing grass,
And watched the white clouds crisply curled
Above the mountain-pass,
And lay among the purple thyme
And from its fragrance caught
Strange hints from some elusive clime
Beyond the bounds of thought.

Glimpses of fair forgotten things
Beyond the gates of birth,
Half-caught from far off ancient springs
In heaven, and half of earth;
And coloured like a fairy-tale
And whispering evermore
Half memories from the half-fenced pale
Of lives we lived before.

Here, weary of the roaring town
A-while may I return
And while the west wind roams the down
Lie still, lie still and learn:
Here are green leagues of murmuring wheat
With blue skies overhead,
And, all around, the winds are sweet
With May-bloom, white and red.

And, to and fro, the bee still hums
His low unchanging song,
And the same rustling whisper comes
As through the ages long:
Through all the thousands of the years
That same sweet rumour flows,
With dreaming skies and gleaming tears
And kisses and the rose.

Once more the children throng the lanes,
Themselves like flowers, to weave
Their garlands and their daisy-chains
And listen and believe
The tale of *Once-upon-a-time*,
And hear the *Long-ago*
And *Happy-ever-after* chime
Because it must be so.

And by those thousands of the years
It is, though scarce we see,
Dazed with the rainbows of our tears,
Their steadfast unity,
It is, or life's disjointed schemes,
These stones, these ferns unfurled
With such deep care—a madman's dreams
Were wisdom to this world!

Dust into dust! Lie still and learn,
Hear how the ages sing
The solemn joy of our return
To that which makes the Spring:
Even as we came, with childhood's trust,
Wide-eyed we go, to Thee
Who holdest in Thy sacred dust
The heavenly Springs to be.

A MAY-DAY CAROL.

WHAT is the loveliest light that Spring
  Rosily parting her robe of gray
Girdled with leaflet green, can fling
  Over the fields where her white feet stray?
What is the merriest promise of May
  Flung o'er the dew-drenched April flowers?
Tell me, you on the pear-tree spray—
  Carol of birds between the showers.

What can life at its lightest bring
  Better than this on its brightest day?
How should we fetter the white-throat's wing
  Wild with joy of its woodland way?
Sweet, should love for an hour delay,
  Swift, while the primrose-time is ours!
What is the lover's royallest lay?—
  Carol of birds between the showers.

What is the murmur of bees a-swing?
  What is the laugh of a child at play?
What is the song that the angels sing?
  (Where were the tune could the sweet notes stay
Longer than this, to kiss and betray?)
  Nay, on the blue sky's topmost towers,
What is the song of the seraphim? Say—
  Carol of birds between the showers.

Thread the stars on a silver string,
  (So did they sing in Bethlehem's bowers!)
Mirth for a little one, grief for a king,
  Carol of birds between the showers.

THE CALL OF THE SPRING.

Come, choose your road and away, my lad,
Come, choose your road and away!
We'll out of the town by the road's bright crown
As it dips to the dazzling day.
It's a long white road for the weary;
But it rolls through the heart of the May.

Though many a road would merrily ring
To the tramp of your marching feet,
All roads are one from the day that's done,
And the miles are swift and sweet,
And the graves of your friends are the mile-stones
To the land where all roads meet.

But the call that you hear this day, my lad,
Is the Spring's old bugle of mirth
When the year's green fire in a soul's desire
Is brought like a rose to the birth;
And knights ride out to adventure
As the flowers break out of the earth.

Over the sweet-smelling mountain-passes
The clouds lie brightly curled;
The wild-flowers cling to the crags and swing
With cataract-dews impearled;
And the way, the way that you choose this day
Is the way to the end of the world.

It rolls from the golden long ago
To the land that we ne'er shall find;
And it's uphill here, but it's downhill there,
For the road is wise and kind,
And all rough places and cheerless faces
Will soon be left behind.

Come, choose your road and away, away,
We'll follow the gypsy sun;
For it's soon, too soon to the end of the day,
And the day is well begun;
And the road rolls on through the heart of the May,
And there's never a May but one.

There's a fir-wood here, and a dog-rose there,
And a note of the mating dove;
And a glimpse, maybe, of the warm blue sea,
And the warm white clouds above;
And warm to your breast in a tenderer nest
Your sweetheart's little glove.

There's not much better to win, my lad,
There's not much better to win!
You have lived, you have loved, you have fought, you have proved
The worth of folly and sin;
So now come out of the City's rout,
Come out of the dust and the din.

Come out,—a bundle and stick is all
You'll need to carry along,
If your heart can carry a kindly word,
And your lips can carry a song;
You may leave the lave to the keep o' the grave,
If your lips can carry a song!

Come, choose your road and away, my lad,
Come, choose your road and away!
We'll out of the town by the road's bright crown,
As it dips to the sapphire day!
All roads may meet at the world's end,
But, hey for the heart of the May!
Come, choose your road and away, dear lad,
Come choose your road and away.

A DEVONSHIRE DITTY.

I.

In a leafy lane of Devon
There's a cottage that I know,
Then a garden—then, a gray old crumbling wall,
And the wall's the wall of heaven
(Where I hardly care to go)
And there isn't any fiery sword at all.

II.

But I never went to heaven.
There was right good reason why,
For they sent a shining angel to me there,
An angel, down in Devon,
(Clad in muslin by the bye)
With the halo of the sunshine on her hair.

III.

Ah, whate'er the darkness covers,
And whate'er we sing or say,
Would you climb the wall of heaven an hour too soon
If you knew a place for lovers
Where the apple-blossoms stray
Out of heaven to sway and whisper to the moon?

IV.

When we die—we'll think of Devon
Where the garden's all aglow
With the flowers that stray across the gray
old wall:
Then we'll climb it, out of heaven,
From the other side you know,
Straggle over it from heaven
With the apple-blossom snow,
Tumble back again to Devon
Laugh and love as long ago,
Where there isn't any fiery sword at all.

BACCHUS AND THE PIRATES.

HALF a hundred terrible pig-tails, pirates famous in song and story,
Hoisting the old black flag once more, in a palmy harbour of Caribbee,
"Farewell" we waved to our negro lasses, and chorussing out to the billows of glory,
Billows a-glitter with rum and gold, we followed the sunset over the sea.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our capstan song we sung:
Half a hundred broad-sheet pirates
When the world was young!

Sea-roads plated with pieces of eight that rolled to a heaven by rum made mellow,
Heaved and coloured our barque's black nose where the Lascar sang to a twinkling star,
And the tangled bow-sprit plunged and dipped its point in the West's wild red and yellow,
Till the curved white moon crept out astern like a naked knife from a blue cymar.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our capstan song we sung:
Half a hundred terrible pirates
When the world was young!

Half a hundred tarry pig-tails, Teach, the chewer of glass, had taught us,
Taught us to balance the plank ye walk, your little plank-bridge to Kingdom Come:
Half a score had sailed with Flint, and a dozen or so the devil had brought us
Back from the pit where Blackbeard lay, in Beelzebub's bosom, a-screech for rum.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our capstan song we sung:
Half a hundred piping pirates
When the world was young!

There was Captain Hook (of whom ye have heard—so called from his terrible cold steel twister,
His own right hand having gone to a shark with a taste for skippers on pirate-trips),
There was Silver himself, with his cruel crutch, and the blind man Pew, with a phiz like a blister,
Gouged and white and dreadfully dried in the reek of a thousand burning ships.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our capstan song we sung:
Half a hundred cut-throat pirates
When the world was young!

With our silver buckles and French cocked hats and our skirted coats (they were growing greener,
But green and gold look well when spliced! We'd trimmed 'em up wi' some fine fresh lace)
Bravely over the seas we danced to the horn-pipe tune of a concertina,
Cutlasses jetting beneath our skirts and cambric handkerchiefs all in place.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our capstan song we sung:
Half a hundred elegant pirates
When the world was young!

And our black prow grated, one golden noon, on the happiest isle of the Happy Islands,
An isle of Paradise, fair as a gem, on the sparkling breast of the wine-dark deep,
An isle of blossom and yellow sand, and enchanted vines on the purple highlands,
Wi' grapes like melons, nay clustering suns, a-sprawl over cliffs in their noonday sleep.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our capstan song we sung:
Half a hundred dream-struck pirates
When the world was young!

And lo! on the soft warm edge of the sand, where the sea like wine in a golden noggin
Creamed, and the rainbow-bubbles clung to his flame-red hair, a white youth lay,
Sleeping; and now, as his drowsy grip relaxed, the cup that he squeezed his grog in
Slipped from his hand and its purple dregs were mixed with the flames and flakes of spray.

He'd only a leopard-skin around
His chest, whereas we sung:
Half a hundred diffident pirates
When the world was young!

And we suddenly saw (had we seen them before? They were coloured like sand or the pelt on his shoulders)
His head was pillowed on two great leopards, whose breathing rose and sank with his own;
Now a pirate is bold, but the vision was rum and would *call* for rum in the best of beholders,
And it seemed we had seen Him before, in a dream, with that flame-red hair and that vine-leaf crown.

And the earth went round, and the rum went round,
And softlier now we sung:
Half a hundred awe-struck pirates
When the world was young!

Now Timothy Hook (of whom ye have heard with his talon
of steel) our doughty skipper,
A man that, in youth being brought up pious, had many
a book on his cabin-shelf,
Suddenly caught at a comrade's hand with the tearing claws
of his cold steel flipper
And cried, "Great Thunder and Brimstone, boys, I've
hit it at last! *'Tis Bacchus himself.*"

And the earth went round, and the rum went round,
And never a word we sung:
Half a hundred tottering pirates
When the world was young!

He flung his French cocked hat i' the foam (though its lace
was the best of his wearing apparel):
We stared at him—Bacchus! the sea reeled round like a
wine-vat splashing with purple dreams,
And the sunset-skies were dashed with blood of the grape
as the sun like a new-staved barrel
Flooded the tumbling West with wine and spattered the
clouds with crimson gleams.

And the earth went round, and our heads went round,
And never a word we sung:
Half a hundred staggering pirates
When the world was young!

Down to the ship for a fishing-net our crafty Hook sent
Silver leaping;
Back he came on his pounding crutch, for all the world
like a kangaroo;
And we caught the net and up to the Sleeper on hands
and knees we all went creeping,
Flung it across him and staked it down! 'Twas the best
of our dreams and the dream was true.

And the earth went round, and the rum went round,
And loudly now we sung:
Half a hundred jubilant pirates
When the world was young!

We had caught our god, and we got him aboard ere he
woke (he was more than a little heavy);
Glittering, beautiful, flushed he lay in the lurching bows
of the old black barque,
As the sunset died and the white moon dawned, and we
saw on the island a star-bright bevy
Of naked Bacchanals stealing to watch through the
whispering vines in the purple dark!

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our capstan song we sung:
Half a hundred innocent pirates
When the world was young!

Beautiful under the sailing moon, in the tangled net, with
the leopards beside him,
Snared like a wild young red-lipped merman, wilful,
petulant, flushed he lay;
While Silver and Hook in their big sea-boots and their
boat-cloaks guarded and gleefully eyed him,
Thinking what Bacchus might do for a seaman, like
standing him drinks, as a man might say.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
We sailed away and sung:
Half a hundred fanciful pirates
When the world was young!

All the grog that ever was heard of, gods, was it stowed in
our sure possession?
O, the pictures that broached the skies and poured their
colours across our dreams!
O, the thoughts that tapped the sunset, and rolled like a
great torchlight procession
Down our throats in a glory of glories, a roaring splendour
of golden streams!

And the earth went round, and the stars went round,
As we hauled the sheets and sung:
Half a hundred infinite pirates
When the world was young!

Beautiful, white, at the break of day, He woke and, the net
in a smoke dissolving,
He rose like a flame, with his yellow-eyed pards and his
flame-red hair like a windy dawn,
And the crew kept back, respectful like, till the leopards
advanced with their eyes revolving,
Then up the rigging went Silver and Hook, and the rest
of us followed with case-knives drawn.

While earth goes round, let rum go round,
Our cross-tree song we sung:
Half a hundred terrified pirates
When the world was young!

And "Take me home to my happy island!" he says.
"Not I," sings Hook, "by thunder;
We'll take you home to a happier isle, our palmy har-
bour of Caribbee!"
"You won't!" says Bacchus, and quick as a dream the
planks of the deck just heaved asunder,
And a mighty Vine came straggling up that grew from
the depths of the wine-dark sea.

And the sea went round, and the skies went round,
As our cross-tree song we sung:
Half a hundred horrified pirates
When the world was young!

We were anchored fast as an oak on land, and the branches
clutched and the tendrils quickened,
And bound us writhing like snakes to the spars! Ay,
we hacked with our knives at the boughs in vain,
And Bacchus laughed loud on the decks below, as ever the
tough sprays tightened and thickened,
And the blazing hours went by, and we gaped with thirst
and our ribs were racked with pain.

And the skies went round, and the sea swam round,
And we knew not what we sung:
Half a hundred lunatic pirates
When the world was young!

Bunch upon bunch of sunlike grapes, as we writhed and struggled and raved and strangled,
Bunch upon bunch of gold and purple daubed its bloom on our baked black lips.
Clustering grapes, O, bigger than pumpkins, just out of reach they bobbed and dangled
Over the vine-entangled sails of that most dumbfounded of pirate ships!

And the sun went round, and the moon came round,
And mocked us where we hung:
Half a hundred maniac pirates
When the world was young!

Over the waters the white moon winked its bruised old eye at our bowery prison,
When suddenly we were aware of a light such as never a moon or a ship's lamp throws,
And a shallop of pearl, like a Nautilus shell, came shimmering up as by magic arisen,
With sails of silk and a glory around it that turned the sea to a rippling rose.

And our heads went round, and the stars went round,
At the song that cruiser sung:
Half a hundred goggle-eyed pirates
When the world was young!

Half a hundred rose-white Bacchanals hauled the ropes of that rosy cruiser!
Over the seas they came and laid their little white hands on the old black barque;
And Bacchus he ups and he steps aboard: "Hi, stop!" cries Hook, "you frantic old boozer!
Belay, below there, don't you go and leave poor pirates to die in the dark!"

And the moon went round, and the stars went round,
As they all pushed off and sung:
Half a hundred ribbonless Bacchanals
When the world was young!

Over the seas they went and Bacchus he stands, with his yellow-eyed leopards beside him,
High on the poop of rose and pearl, and kisses his hand to us, pleasant as pie!
While the Bacchanals danced to their tambourines, and the vine-leaves flew, and Hook just eyed him
Once, as a man that was brought up pious, and scornfully hollers, "*Well, you aint shy!*"

For all around him, vine-leaf crowned,
The wild white Bacchanals flung!
Nor it wasn't a sight for respectable pirates
When the world was young!

All around that rainbow-Nautilus rippled the bloom of a thousand roses,
Nay, but the sparkle of fairy sea-nymphs breasting a fairy-like sea of wine,
Swimming around it in murmuring thousands, with white arms tossing; till—all that *we* knows is
The light went out, and the night was dark, and the grapes had burst and their juice was—brine!

And the vines that bound our bodies round
Were plain wet ropes that clung:
Squeezing the light out o' fifty pirates
When the world was young!

. . . . . .

Over the seas in the pomp of dawn a king's ship came with her proud flag flying;
Cloud upon cloud we watched her tower with her belts and her crowded zones of sail;
And an A.B. perched in a white crow's nest, with a brass-rimmed spy-glass quietly spying,
As we swallowed the lumps in our choking throats and uttered our last faint feeble hail!

And our heads went round as the ship went round,
And we thought how coves had swung:
All for playing at broad-sheet pirates
When the world was young!

Half a hundred trembling corsairs, all cut loose, but a trifle giddy,
We lands on their trim white decks at last and the bo'sun he whistles us good hot grog,
And we tries to confess, but there wasn't a soul from the Admiral's self to the gold-laced middy
But says, "They're delirious still, poor chaps," and the Cap'n he enters the fact in his log,

That his boat's crew found us nearly drowned
In a barrel without a bung—
Half a hundred suffering sea-cooks
When the world was young!

So we sailed by Execution Dock, where the swinging pirates haughty and scornful
Rattled their chains, and on Margate beach we came like a school-treat safe to land;
And one of us took to religion at once; and the rest of the crew, tho' their hearts were mournful,
Capered about as Christy Minstrels, while Hook conducted the big brass band.

And the sun went round, and the moon went round,
And, O, 'twas a thought that stung!
There was none to believe we were broad-sheet pirates
When the world was young!

Ah, yet (if ye stand me a noggin of rum) shall the old Blue Dolphin echo the story!
We'll hoist the white cross-bones again in our palmy harbour of Caribbee!
We'll wave farewell to our negro lasses and, chorussing out to the billows of glory,
Billows a-glitter with rum and gold, we'll follow the sunset over the sea!

While earth goes round, let rum go round!
O, sing it as we sung!
Half a hundred terrible pirates
When the world was young!

THE NEWSPAPER BOY.

I.

Elf of the City, a lean little hollow-eyed boy
Ragged and tattered, but lithe as a slip of the Spring,
Under the lamp-light he runs with a reckless joy
Shouting a murderer's doom or the death of a King.
Out of the darkness he leaps like a wild strange hint,
Herald of tragedy, comedy, crime and despair,
Waving a poster that hurls you, in fierce black print
One word *Mystery*, under the lamp's white glare.

II.

Elf of the night of the City he darts with his crew
Out of a vaporous furnace of colour that wreathes
Magical letters a-flicker from crimson to blue
High overhead. All round him the mad world seethes
Hansoms, like cantering beetles, with diamond eyes
Run through the moons of it; busses in yellow and red
Hoot; and St Paul's is a bubble afloat in the skies,
Watching the pale moths flit and the dark death's head.

III.

Painted and powdered they shimmer and rustle and stream
Westward, the night moths, masks of the Magdalen!
See,
Puck of the revels, he leaps through the sinister dream
Waving his elfin evangel of *Mystery*,

Puck of the bubble or dome of their scoffing or trust,
Puck of the fairy-like tower with the clock in its face,
Puck of an Empire that whirls on a pellet of dust
Bearing his elfin device thro' the splendours of space.

IV.

Mystery—is it the scribble of doom on the dark,
Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, again?
Mystery,—is it a scrap of remembrance, a spark
Burning still in the fog of a blind world's brain?
Elf of the gossamer tangles of shadow and light,
Wild electrical webs and the battle that rolls
League upon perishing league thro' the ravenous night,
Breaker on perishing breaker of human souls.

V.

Soaked in the colours, a flake of the flying spray
Flung over wreckage and yeast of the murderous town,
Onward he flaunts it, innocent, vicious and gay,
Prophet of prayers that are stifled and loves that drown,
Urchin and sprat of the City that roars like a sea
Surging around him in hunger and splendour and shame,
Cruelty, luxury, madness, he leaps in his glee
Out of the mazes of mist and the vistas of flame.

VI.

Ragged and tattered he scurries away in the gloom:
Over the thundering traffic a moment his cry
Mystery! Mystery!—reckless of death and doom
Rings; and the great wheels roll and the world goes by
Lost, is it lost, that hollow-eyed flash of the light?—
Poor little face flying by with the word that saves,
Pale little mouth of the mask of the measureless night,
Shrilling the heart of it, lost like the foam on its waves!

THE TWO WORLDS.

THIS outer world is but the pictured scroll
Of worlds within the soul,
A coloured chart, a blazoned missal-book
Whereon who rightly look
May spell the splendours with their mortal eyes
And steer to Paradise.

O, well for him that knows and early knows
In his own soul the rose
Secretly burgeons, of this earthly flower
The heavenly paramour:
And all these fairy dreams of green-wood fern,
These waves that break and yearn,
Shadows and hieroglyphs, hills, clouds and seas,
Faces and flowers and trees,
Terrestrial picture-parables, relate
Each to its heavenly mate.

O, well for him that finds in sky and sea
This two-fold mystery,
And loses not (as painfully he spells
The fine-spun syllables)
The cadences, the burning inner gleam,
The poet's heavenly dream.

Well for the poet if this earthly chart
Be printed in his heart,
When to his world of spirit woods and seas
With eager face he flees

And treads the untrodden fields of unknown flowers
And threads the angelic bowers,
And hears that unheard nightingale whose moan
Trembles within his own,
And lovers murmuring in the leafy lanes
Of his own joys and pains.

For though he voyages further than the flight
Of earthly day and night,
Traversing to the sky's remotest ends
A world that he transcends,
Safe, he shall hear the hidden breakers roar
Against the mystic shore;
Shall roam the yellow sands where sirens bare
Their breasts and wind their hair;
Shall with their perfumed tresses blind his eyes,
And still possess the skies.

He, where the deep unearthly jungles are,
Beneath his Eastern star
Shall pass the tawny lion in his den
And cross the quaking fen.
He learnt his path (and treads it undefiled)
When, as a little child,
He bent his head with long and loving looks
O'er earthly picture-books.
His earthly love nestles against his side,
His young celestial guide.

GORSE.

Between my face and the warm blue sky
The crisp white clouds go sailing by,
  And the only sound is the sound of your breathing,
The song of a bird and the sea's long sigh.

Here, on the downs, as a tale re-told
The sprays of the gorse are a-blaze with gold,
  As of old, on the sea-washed hills of my boyhood,
Breathing the same sweet scent as of old.

Under a raggéd golden spray
The great sea sparkles far away,
  Beautiful, bright, as my heart remembers
Many a dazzle of waves in May.

Long ago as I watched them shine
Under the boughs of fir and pine,
  Here I watch them to-day and wonder,
Here, with my love's hand warm in mine.

The soft wings pass that we used to chase,
Dreams that I dreamed had left not a trace,
  The same, the same, with the bars of crimson,
The green-veined white, with its floating grace,

The same to the least bright fleck on their wings!
And I close my eyes, and a lost bird sings,
  And a far sea sighs, and the old sweet fragrance
Wraps me round with the dear dead springs,

Wraps me round with the springs to be
When lovers that think not of you or me
  Laugh, but our eyes will be closed in darkness,
Closed to the sky and the gorse and the sea,

And the same great glory of raggéd gold
Once more, once more, as a tale re-told
  Shall whisper their hearts with the same sweet fragrance
And their warm hands cling, as of old, as of old.

Dead and un-born, the same blue skies
Cover us! Love, as I read your eyes,
  Do I not know whose love enfolds us,
As we fold the past in our memories,

Past, present, future, the old and the new?
From the depths of the grave a cry breaks through
  And trembles, a sky-lark blind in the azure,
The depths of the all-enfolding blue.

O, resurrection of folded years
Deep in our hearts, with your smiles and tears,
  Dead and un-born shall not He remember
Who folds our cry in His heart, and hears.

FOR THE EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY OF GEORGE MEREDITH.

A HEALTH, a ringing health, unto the king
  Of all our hearts to-day! But what proud song
  Should follow on the thought, nor do him wrong?
Except the sea were harp, each mirthful string
The lovely lightning of the nights of Spring,
  And Dawn the lonely listener, glad and grave
  With colours of the sea-shell and the wave
In brightening eye and cheek, there is none to sing!

Drink to him, as men upon an Alpine peak
  Brim one immortal cup of crimson wine,
    And into it drop one pure cold crust of snow,
Then hold it up, too rapturously to speak
  And drink—to the mountains, line on glittering line,
    Surging away into the sunset-glow.

IN MEMORY OF SWINBURNE.

I.

April from shore to shore, from sea to sea,
April in heaven and on the springing spray
Buoyant with birds that sing to welcome May
And April in those eyes that mourn for thee:
"This is my singing month; my hawthorn tree
Burgeons once more," we seemed to hear thee say,
"This is my singing month: my fingers stray
Over the lute. What shall the music be?"

And April answered with too great a song
For mortal lips to sing or hearts to hear,
Heard only of that high invisible throng
For whom thy song makes April all the year!
"My singing month, what bringest thou?" Her breath
Swooned with all music, and she answered—"Death."

II.

Ah, but on earth,—"can'st thou, too, die,"
Low she whispers, "lover of mine?"
April, queen over earth and sky
Whispers, her trembling lashes shine:
'Wings of the sea, good-bye, good-bye,
Down to the dim sea-line."

Home to the heart of thine old-world lover,
Home to thy "fair green-girdled" sea!
There shall thy soul with the sea-birds hover,
Free of the deep as their wings are free;
Free, for the grave-flowers only cover
This, the dark cage of thee.

Thee, the storm-bird, nightingale-souled,
Brother of Sappho, the seas reclaim!
Age upon age have the great waves rolled
Mad with her music, exultant, aflame;
Thee, thee too, shall their glory enfold,
Lit with thy snow-winged fame.

Back, thro' the years, fleets the sea-bird's wing:
Sappho, of old time, once,—ah, hark!
So did he love her of old and sing!
Listen, he flies to her, back thro' the dark!
Sappho, of old time, once. . . . Yea, Spring
Calls him home to her, hark!

Sappho, long since, in the years far sped,
Sappho, I loved thee! Did I not seem
Fosterling only of earth? I have fled,
Fled to thee, sister. Time is a dream!
Shelley is here with us! Death lies dead!
Ah, how the bright waves gleam.

Wide was the cage-door, idly swinging;
April touched me and whispered "come."
Out and away to the great deep winging,
Sister, I flashed to thee over the foam,
Out to the sea of Eternity, singing
"Mother, thy child comes home."

* * * * * *

Ah, but how shall we welcome May
Here where the wing of song droops low,
Here by the last green swinging spray
Brushed by the sea-bird's wings of snow,
We that gazed on his glorious way
Out where the great winds blow?

Here upon earth—"can'st thou, too, die,
Lover of life and lover of mine?"
April, conquering earth and sky
Whispers, her trembling lashes shine:
"Wings of the sea, good-bye, good-bye,
Down to the dim sea-line."

ON THE DEATH OF FRANCIS THOMPSON.

I.

How grandly glow the bays
  Purpureally enwound
With those rich thorns, the brows
  How infinitely crowned
That now thro' Death's dark house
  Have passed with royal gaze:
Purpureally enwound
  How grandly glow the bays.

II.

Sweet, sweet and three-fold sweet,
  Pulsing with three-fold pain,
Where the lark fails of flight
  Soared the celestial strain;
Beyond the sapphire height
  Flew the gold-wingéd feet,
Beautiful, pierced with pain,
  Sweet, sweet and three-fold sweet;

III.

And where *Is not* and *Is*
  Are wed in one sweet Name,
And the world's rootless vine
  With dew of stars a-flame

Laughs, from those deep divine
  Impossibilities,
Our reason all to shame—
  This cannot be, but is;

IV.

Into the Vast, the Deep
  Beyond all mortal sight,
The Nothingness that conceived
  The worlds of day and night,
The Nothingness that heaved
  Pure sides in virgin sleep,
Brought out of Darkness, light;
  And man from out the Deep.

V.

Into that Mystery
  Let not thine hand be thrust:
Nothingness is a world
  Thy science well may trust . . .
But lo, a leaf unfurled,
  Nay, a cry mocking thee
From the first grain of dust—
  I am, yet cannot be!

VI.

Adventuring un-afraid
  Into that last deep shrine,
Must not the child-heart see
  Its deepest symbol shine,
The world's Birth-mystery,
  Whereto the suns are shade?
Lo, the white breast divine—
  The Holy Mother-maid!

VII.

How miss that Sacrifice,
That cross of Yea and Nay,
That paradox of heaven
Whose palms point either way,
Through each a nail being driven
That the arms out-span the skies
And our earth-dust this day
Out-sweeten Paradise.

VIII.

We part the seamless robe,
Our wisdom would divid
The raiment of the King,
Our spear is in His side,
Even while the angels sing
Around our perishing globe,
And Death re-knits in pride
The seamless purple robe.

. . . . .

IX.

How grandly glow the bays
Purpureally enwound
With those rich thorns, the brows
How infinitely crowned
That now thro' Death's dark house
Have passed with royal gaze:
Purpureally enwound
How grandly glow the bays.

IN MEMORY OF MEREDITH.

I.

High on the mountains, who stands proudly, clad with the light of May,
Rich as the dawn, deep-hearted as night, diamond-bright as day,
Who, while the slopes of the beautiful valley throb with our muffled tread
Who, with the hill-flowers wound in her tresses, welcomes our deathless dead?

II.

Is it not she whom he sought so long thro' the high lawns dewy and sweet,
Up thro' the crags and the glittering snows faint-flushed with her rosy feet,
Is it not she—the queen of our night—crowned by the unseen sun,
Artemis, she that can see the light, when light upon earth is none?

III.

Huntress, queen of the dark of the world (no darker at night than noon)
Beauty immortal and undefiled, the Eternal sun's white moon,

Only by thee and thy silver shafts for a flash can our
hearts discern,
Pierced to the quick, the love, the love that still thro' the
dark doth yearn.

IV.

What to his soul were the hill-flowers, what the gold at the
break of day
Shot thro' the red-stemmed firs to the lake where the
swimmer clove his way,
What were the quivering harmonies showered from the
heaven-tossed heart of the lark,
Artemis, Huntress, what were these but thy keen shafts
cleaving the dark?

V.

Frost of the hedge-rows, flash of the jasmine, sparkle of
dew on the leaf,
Seas lit wide by the summer lightning, shafts from thy
diamond sheaf,
Deeply they pierced him, deeply he loved thee, now has
he found thy soul,
Artemis, thine, in this bridal peal, where we hear but the
death-bell toll.

A FRIEND OF CARLYLE.

I.

MASTER of arts, for all those years
Among these lonely Devon moors,
(Lonely to you, but smiles and tears
Have crowded thro' my school-house doors)
These garden walls would hardly suit
A man on great ambitions bent,
And yet my trees have borne some fruit
Of grateful, ay and proud content.

II.

Drinking the sunlight as he spoke,
Hale in September as in May,
Across his clear frank face there broke
A smile that seemed to praise and pray,
Half rapture, half adoring love,
And steadfast as the soul of truth
Which, though the thick gray gleamed above,
Brightened his eyes with deeper youth.

III.

For think, he said, each year a score
Of lives commended to my trust,
('Tis never less and sometimes more)
It leaves the mind no time to rust:

They come—just when for good or ill
My teaching kindles or controls.
From first to last my striving will
Has helped to train ten hundred souls.

IV.

Forgive me, Thou who knowest all
The barren and the unhelpful days;
For still to Thee my heart would call
Before I went my morning ways,
Or turned my pencilled old Carlyle,
My guide thro' doubts of long ago,
And thought, to-day some word or smile
May teach them more than aught I know.

V.

For I did doubt: though all my youth
To one great ministry aspired,
I saw the fiery sword of truth
Guarding the portal I desired.
The God whom Science could destroy
I slowly followed to his tomb,
Then turned, alone, a friendless boy
To wrestle with the o'erwhelming gloom.

VI.

For truth, for truth I strove, and yet
Could I forget the tender pride
Which those who loved me had so set
On this my work, or cast aside
The years of labour (spent to learn
That all the learning was a dream)
Thus on the very verge to turn
And meet—Love's eyes with tears a-gleam?

VII.

And sacrifices had been made
To give me . . . Well, the tale is old:
But even your modern men are swayed
By fears on one great subject—"gold";
And so, you'll understand, it meant
My "whole career," and check your smile,
When, having lost my God, I went
To my great hero-soul—Carlyle.

VIII.

They chatter of him? Let that be!
I'd only seen him once: he stood
Crowned by his university,
Wearing the gorgeous robes and hood.
Beneath him surged a cheering crowd
Of young men straining tow'rds his face.
A little flushed, a little proud,
He took his throne in that high place.

IX.

O, what a drama undiscerned
Swelled to its climax in that hour,
Where he the poor Scotch peasant burned
Before us with a seraph's power,
A nation's laurels on his brow
While, far away, Death's levelled dart
Unseen, unfeared, undreamed, e'en now
Struck at his heart's belovéd heart.

X.

We clamoured for our king to speak!
He rose. A breathless silence fell
The flush of fame was on his cheek.
He bore that regal splendour well,

Then—suddenly—cast the robes aside!
Our hearts burned and our eyes grew wet:
He spoke as at his own hearth-side,
But O, we knew him kinglier yet.

XI.

Still through and through me thrills the fire,
Unquenched by all the following years,
Which bade us trust the truth, aspire,
And blinded us with god-like tears!
That face had suffered in the same
Dark night, through which I still must grope;
But, lit with some transfiguring flame,
He closed—*We bid you be of hope.*

XII.

And so I went to him. He heard,
O, kindly as a father might;
And, here and there, some burning word
Flashed sudden lightnings thro' my night:
And, as he spoke, I felt and saw
The night was only where I lay
In one dark gulf, and truth's own law
Would lead me tow'rds the perfect day.

XIII.

"As from the blind seed springs the flower,
As from the acorn soars the oak,
From darkness into heaven may tower
The soul of man," he gently spoke,
"From Time into the Eternal Love!
Rally the might within thee, trust
In truth, and those broad heavens above,
They will not doom thee to the dust."

* * * * * *

XIV.

Troubles enough there were indeed
Before I caught the first great gleam.
It came when I was most in need
And, like one waking from a dream,
To a new heaven and a new earth
I saw and, kneeling, wept for joy—
Death bringing heavenly life to birth
In bliss which nothing can destroy.

XV.

It was the night my loved one died,
The year our child, who lives, was born!
All night upon my knees I cried
To God to change His world ere morn,
"Roll back Thy stars, bring back my dead,
And take what else Thou wilt away;
But bring not back to me," I said,
"The hopeless horror of the day."

XVI.

I could not live, I could not die,
My fate was not in my control:
I only knew that this wild cry
Would, with the dawn, destroy my soul,
If, with that dawn, our rutted road,
The same dark trees, the same dark farms
Should mock me! "God, too great Thy load!"
Then—round me swept the Eternal arms.

XVII.

That once, if never in my life
Again, I felt them, as the dawn
Came, with a deeper wonder rife
Than aught in that old world withdrawn:

I felt His love around me furled,
His pity, gentle as the dew,
And plucked the blind aside. *The world*
Was changed. His earth was made anew.

XVIII.

A pure white mantle blotted out
The world I used to know:
There was no scarlet in the sky
Or on the hills below,
Gently as mercy out of heaven
Came down the healing snow.

XIX.

The trees that were so dark and bare
Stood up in radiant white,
And the road forgot its furrowed care
As day forgets the night,
And the new heavens and the new earth
Lay robed in dazzling light.

XX.

And every flake that fell from heaven
Was like an angel's kiss,
Or a feather fluttering from the wings
Of some dear soul in bliss
Who gently leaned from that bright world
To soothe the pain of this.

XXI.

Oft had I felt for some brief flash
The heavenly secret glow
In sunsets, traced some hieroglyph
In Nature—flowers that blow
And perish; tender, climbing boughs;
The stars—and then—'twould go.

XXII.

But here I felt within my soul,
Clear as on field and tree,
The falling of the heavenly snow,
A twofold mystery,
And one was meant to bless the world,
And one was meant for me.

XXIII.

And at the grave-side of my love
Once more thro' Nature did I see
Unspeakable, O heaven above,
What shining from Eternity!
They lowered the coffin to its place,
And o'er the grave the great sun smiled
Full in—that lifted, laughing face,
There, in the nurse's arms, the child.

XXIV.

O, what are words or waves of the sea
Save for the Power that through them shines,
The Soul that gives them unity
And sends its glory through the lines?
Will art—nay, science—deem it vain,
That world-wide flash whereby I knew
His gentle touch in sun and rain,
His mercy gliding in the dew?

XXV.

Since then, the Power behind the world
Has never left me, and I find
In every April fern unfurled
Some vision of the Eternal mind:

The clouds affirm their Charioteer,
The hills demand His higher throne,
And year cries out to fleeting year
The Everlasting claims His own.

XXVI.

The God I worshipped when a boy
I lost; and now that fifty years
Have passed with all they could destroy
Of all my hopes and dreams and fears,
Full fifty years, in this dear place
Where all those generations trod,
Why (and heaven lit his lifted face)
Now, there seems nothing else but God.

THE TESTIMONY OF ART.

As earth, sad earth, thrusts many a gloomy cape
  Into the sea's bright colour and living glee,
  So do we strive to embay that mystery
Which earthly hands must ever let escape;
The Word we seek for is the golden shape
  That shall enshrine the Soul we cannot see,
  A temporal chalice of Eternity
Purple with beating blood of the hallowed grape.

Once was it wine and sacramental bread
  Whereby we knew the power that through Him smiled
    When, in one still small utterance, He hurled
The Eternities beneath His feet and said
  With lips, O meek as any little child,
    Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

THE SCHOLARS.

WHERE is the scholar whose clear mind can hold
  The floral text of one sweet April mead?—
  The flowing lines, which few can spell indeed
Though most will note the scarlet and the gold
Around the flourishing capitals grandly scrolled;
  But ah, the subtle cadences that need
  The lover's heart, the lover's heart to read,
And ah, the songs unsung, the tales un-told.

Poor fools-capped scholars—grammar keeps us close,
  The primers thrall us, and our eyes grow dim:
    When will old Master Science hear the call,
Bid us run free with life in every limb
  To breathe the poems and hear the last red rose
    Gossiping over God's gray garden-wall?

RESURRECTION.

Once more I hear the everlasting sea
Breathing beneath the mountain's fragrant breast,
Come unto Me, come unto Me,
And I will give you rest.

We have destroyed the Temple and in three days
He hath rebuilt it—all things are made new:
And hark what wild throats pour His praise
Beneath the boundless blue.

We plucked down all His altars, cried aloud
And gashed ourselves for little gods of clay!
Yon floating cloud was but a cloud,
The May no more than May.

We plucked down all His altars, left not one
Save where, perchance (and ah, the joy was fleet),
We laid our garlands in the sun
At the white Sea-born's feet.

We plucked down all His altars, not to make
The small praise greater, but the great praise less,
We sealed all fountains where the soul could slake
Its thirst and weariness.

"Love" was too small, too human to be found
In that transcendent source whence love was born:
We talked of "forces": heaven was crowned
With philosophic thorn.

"Your God is in your image," we cried, but O,
'Twas only man's own deepest heart ye gave,
Knowing that He transcended all ye know,
While we—we dug His grave.

Denied Him even the crown on our own brow,
E'en these poor symbols of His loftier reign,
Levelled His Temple with the dust, and now
He is risen, He is risen again,

Risen, like this resurrection of the year,
This grand ascension of the choral spring,
Which those harp-crowded heavens bend to hear
And meet upon the wing.

"He is dead," we cried, and even amid that gloom
The wintry veil was rent! The new-born day
Showed us the Angel seated in the tomb
And the stone rolled away.

It is the hour! We challenge heaven above
Now, to deny our slight ephemeral breath
Joy, anguish, and that everlasting love
Which triumphs over death.

A JAPANESE LOVE-SONG

I.

THE young moon is white,
But the willows are blue:
Your small lips are red,
But the great clouds are gray:
The waves are so many
That whisper to you;
But my love is only
One flight of spray.

II.

The bright drops are many,
The dark wave is one:
The dark wave subsides,
And the bright sea remains!
And wherever, O singing
Maid, you may run,
You are one with the world
For all your pains.

III.

Though the great skies are dark,
And your small feet are white,
Though your wide eyes are blue
And the closed poppies red,

Tho' the kisses are many
That colour the night,
They are linked like pearls
On one golden thread.

IV.

Were the gray clouds not made
For the red of your mouth;
The ages for flight
Of the butterfly years;
The sweet of the peach
For the pale lips of drouth,
The sunlight of smiles
For the shadow of tears?

V.

Love, Love is the thread
That has pierced them with bliss!
All their hues are but notes
In one world-wide tune:
Lips, willows, and waves,
We are one as we kiss,
And your face and the flowers
Faint away in the moon.

THE TWO PAINTERS.

(A TALE OF OLD JAPAN.)

I.

Yoichi Tenko, the painter,
  Dwelt by the purple sea,
Painting the peacock islands
  Under his willow-tree:
Also in temples he painted
  Dragons of old Japan,
With a child to look at the pictures—
  Little O Kimi San.

Kimi, the child of his brother,
  Bright as the moon in May,
White as a lotus lily,
  Pink as a plum-tree spray,
Linking her soft arm round him
  Sang to his heart for an hour,
Kissed him with ripples of laughter
  And lips of the cherry flower.

Child of the old pearl-fisher
  Lost in his junk at sea,
Kimi was loved of Tenko
  As his own child might be,
Yoichi Tenko the painter,
  Wrinkled and grey and old,
Teacher of many disciples
  That paid for his dreams with gold.

II.

Peonies, peonies crowned the May!
Clad in blue and white array
  Came Sawara to the school
Under the silvery willow-tree,
  All to learn of Tenko!
Riding on a milk-white mule,
  Young and poor and proud was he,
Lissom as a cherry spray
(Peonies, peonies, crowned the day!)
And he rode the golden way
  To the school of Tenko.

Swift to learn, beneath his hand
Soon he watched his wonderland
  Growing cloud by magic cloud,
Under the silvery willow-tree
  In the school of Tenko:
Kimi watched him, young and proud,
  Painting by the purple sea,
Lying on the golden sand
Watched his golden wings expand!
(None but Love will understand
  All she hid from Tenko.)

He could paint her tree and flower,
Sea and spray and wizard's tower,
  With one stroke, now hard, now soft,
Under the silvery willow-tree
  In the school of Tenko:
He could fling a bird aloft,
  Splash a dragon in the sea,
Crown a princess in her bower,
With one stroke of magic power;
And she watched him, hour by hour,
  In the school of Tenko.

Yoichi Tenko, wondering, scanned
All the work of that young hand,
Gazed his kakemonos o'er,
Under the silvery willow-tree
In the school of Tenko:
"I can teach you nothing more,
Thought or craft or mystery;
Let your golden wings expand,
They will shadow half the land,
All the world's at your command,
Come no more to Tenko."

Lying on the golden sand,
Kimi watched his wings expand;
Wept.—He could not understand
Why she wept, said Tenko.

III.

So, in her blue kimono,
Pale as the sickle moon
Glimmered thro' soft plum-branches
Blue in the dusk of June,
Stole she, willing and waning,
Frightened and unafraid,—
"Take me with you, Sawara,
Over the sea," she said.

Small and sadly beseeching,
Under the willow-tree,
Glimmered her face like a foam-flake
Drifting over the sea:
Pale as a drifting blossom,
Lifted her face to his eyes:
Slowly he gathered and held her
Under the drifting skies.

Poor little face cast backward,
Better to see his own,
Earth and heaven went past them
Drifting: they two, alone
Stood, immortal. He whispered—
"Nothing can part us two!"
Backward her sad little face went
Drifting, and dreamed it true.

"Others are happy," she murmured,
"Maidens and men I have seen;
You are my king, Sawara,
O, let me be your queen!
If I am all too lowly,"
Sadly she strove to smile,
"Let me follow your footsteps,
Your slave for a little while."

Surely, he thought, I have painted
Nothing so fair as this
Moonlit almond blossom
Sweet to fold and kiss,
Brow that is filled with music,
Shell of a faery sea,
Eyes like the holy violets
Brimmed with dew for me.

"Wait for Sawara," he whispered,
"Does not his whole heart yearn
Now to his moon-bright maiden?
Wait, for he will return
Rich as the wave on the moon's path
Rushing to claim his bride!"
So they plighted their promise,
And the ebbing sea-wave sighed.

IV.

Moon and flower and butterfly,
Earth and heaven went drifting by,
  Three long years while Kimi dreamed
Under the silvery willow-tree
  In the school of Tenko,
Steadfast while the whole world streamed
  Past her tow'rds Eternity;
Steadfast till with one great cry,
Ringing to the gods on high,
Golden wings should blind the sky
  And bring him back to Tenko.

Three long years and nought to say
"Sweet, I come the golden way,
  Riding royally to the school
Under the silvery willow-tree
  Claim my bride of Tenko;
Silver bells on a milk-white mule,
  Rose-red sails on an emerald sea!" . . .
Kimi sometimes went to pray
In the temple nigh the bay,
Dreamed all night and gazed all day
  Over the sea from Tenko.

Far away his growing fame
Lit the clouds. No message came
  From the sky, whereon she gazed
Under the silvery willow-tree
  Far away from Tenko!
Small white hands in the temple raised
  Pleaded with the Mystery,—
"Stick of incense in the flame,
Though my love forget my name,
Help him, bless him, all the same,
  And . . . bring him back to Tenko!"

Rose-white temple nigh the bay,
Hush! for Kimi comes to pray,
Dream all night and gaze all day
Over the sea from Tenko.

v.

So, when the rich young merchant
Showed him his bags of gold,
Yoichi Tenko, the painter,
Gave him her hand to hold,
Said, "You shall wed him, O Kimi:"
Softly he lied and smiled—
"*Yea, for Sawara is wedded!*
Let him not mock you, child."

Dumbly she turned and left them,
Never a word or cry
Broke from her lips' gray petals
Under the drifting sky:
Down to the spray and the rainbows,
Where she had watched him of old
Painting the rose-red islands,
Painting the sand's wet gold,

Down to their dreams of the sunset,
Frail as a flower's white ghost,
Lonely and lost she wandered
Down to the darkening coast;
Lost in the drifting midnight,
Weeping, desolate, blind.
Many went out to seek her:
Never a heart could find.

Yoichi Tenko, the painter,
Plucked from his willow-tree
Two big paper lanterns
And ran to the brink of the sea;

Over his head he held them,
Crying, and only heard,
Somewhere, out in the darkness,
The cry of a wandering bird.

VI.

Peonies, peonies thronged the May
When in royal-rich array
Came Sawara to the school
Under the silvery willow-tree—
To the school of Tenko!
Silver bells on a milk-white mule,
Rose-red sails on an emerald sea!
Over the bloom of the cherry spray,
Peonies, peonies dimmed the day;
And he rode the royal way
Back to Yoichi Tenko.

Yoichi Tenko, half afraid,
Whispered, "Wed some other maid;
Kimi left me all alone
Under the silvery willow-tree,
Left me," whispered Tenko,
"Kimi had a heart of stone!"—
"Kimi, Kimi? Who is she?
Kimi? Ah—the child that played
Round the willow-tree. She prayed
Often; and, whate'er I said,
She believed it, Tenko."

He had come to paint anew
Those dim isles of rose and blue,
For a palace far away,
Under the silvery willow-tree—
So he said to Tenko;
And he painted, day by day,
Golden visions of the sea.

No, he had not come to woo;
Yet, had Kimi proven true,
Doubtless he had loved her too,
Hardly less than Tenko.

Since the thought was in his head,
He would make his choice and wed;
And a lovely maid he chose
Under the silvery willow-tree.
"Fairer far," said Tenko.
"Kimi had a twisted nose,
And a foot too small, for me,
And her face was dull as lead!"
"Nay, a flower, be it white or red,
Is a flower," Sawara said!
"So it is," said Tenko.

VII.

Great Sawara, the painter,
Sought, on a day of days,
One of the peacock islands
Out in the sunset haze:
Rose-red sails on the water
Carried him quickly nigh;
There would he paint him a wonder
Worthy of Hokusai.

Lo, as he leapt o'er the creaming
Roses of faery foam,
Out of the green-lipped caverns
Under the isle's blue dome,
White as a drifting snow-flake,
White as the moon's white flame,
White as a ghost from the darkness,
Little O Kimi came.

"Long I have waited, Sawara,
Here in our sunset isle,
Sawara, Sawara, Sawara,
Look on me once, and smile;
Face I have watched so long for,
Hands I have longed to hold,
Sawara, Sawara, Sawara,
Why is your heart so cold?"

Surely, he thought, I have painted
Nothing so fair as this
Moonlit almond blossom
Sweet to fold and kiss. . . .
"Kimi," he said, "I am wedded!
Hush, for it could not be!"
"Kiss me one kiss," she whispered,
"Me also, even me."

Small and terribly drifting
Backward, her sad white face
Lifted up to Sawara
Once, in that lonely place,
White as a drifting blossom
Under his wondering eyes,
Slowly he gathered and held her
Under the drifting skies.

"Others are happy," she whispered,
"Maidens and men I have seen:
Be happy, be happy, Sawara!
The other—shall be—your queen!
Kiss me one kiss for parting."
Trembling she lifted her head,
Then like a broken blossom
It fell on his arm. She was dead.

VIII.

Much impressed, Sawara straight
(Though the hour was growing late)
  Made a sketch of Kimi lying
By the lonely, sighing sea,
  Brought it back to Tenko.
Tenko looked it over crying
  (Under the silvery willow-tree).
"You have burst the golden gate!
You have conquered Time and Fate!
Hokusai is not so great!
  This is art," said Tenko!

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND.

I.

I REMEMBER—
a breath, a breath
Blown thro' the rosy gates of birth,
A morning freshness not of the earth
But cool and strange and lovely as death
In Paradise, in Paradise,
When, all to suffer the old sweet pain
Closing his immortal eyes
Wonder-wild an angel lies
With wings of rainbow-tinctured grain
Withering till—ah, wonder-wild,
Here on the dawning earth again
He wakes, a little child.

II.

I remember—
a gleam, a gleam
Of sparkling waves and warm blue sky
Far away and long ago,
Or ever I knew that youth could die;
And out of the dawn, the dawn, the dawn,
Into the unknown life we sailed
As out of sleep into a dream,
And, as with elfin cables drawn
In dusk of purple over the glowing
Wrinkled measureless emerald sea,
The light cloud shadows larger far

Than the sweet shapes which drew them on,
Fairily delicate shadows flowing
Between us and the morning star
Chased us all a summer's day,
And our sail like a dew-lit blossom shone
Till, over a rainbow haze of spray
That arched a reef of surf like snow
—Far away and long ago—
We saw the sky-line rosily engrailed
With tufted peaks above a smooth lagoon
Which growing, growing, growing as we sailed
Curved all around them like a crescent moon;
And then we saw the purple-shadowed creeks,
The feathery palms, the gleaming golden streaks
Of sand, and nearer yet, like jewels of fire
Streaming between the boughs, or floating higher
Like tiny sunset-clouds in noon-day skies,
The birds of Paradise.

III.

The island floated in the air,
Its image floated in the sea:
Which was the shadow? Both were fair:
Like sister souls they seemed to be;
And one was dreaming and asleep,
And one bent down from Paradise
To kiss with radiance in the deep
The darkling lips and eyes.

And, mingling softly in their dreams,
That holy kiss of sea and sky
Transfused the shadows and the gleams
Of Time and of Eternity:
The dusky face looked up and gave
To heaven its golden shadowed calm;
The face of light fulfilled the wave
With blissful wings and fans of palm.

Above, the tufted rosy peaks
That melted in the warm blue skies,
Below, the purple-shadowed creeks
That glassed the birds of Paradise—
A bridal knot, it hung in heaven;
And, all around, the still lagoon
From bloom of dawn to blush of even
Curved like a crescent moon.

And there we wandered evermore
Thro' boyhood's everlasting years,
Listening the murmur of the shore
As one that lifts a shell and hears
The murmur of forgotten seas
Around some lost Broceliande,
The sigh of sweet Eternities
That turn the world to fairy-land,

That turned our isle to a single pearl
Glowing in measureless waves of wine!
Above, below, the clouds would curl,
Above, below, the stars would shine
In sky and sea. We hung in heaven!
Time and space were but elfin-sweet
Rock-bound pools for the dawn and even
To wade with their rosy feet.

Our pirate cavern faced the West:
We closed its door with screens of palm,
While some went out to seek the nest
Wherein the Phœnix, breathing balm,
Burns and dies to live for ever
(How should we dream we lived to die?)
And some would fish in the purple river
That thro' the hills brought down the sky.

And some would dive in the lagoon
Like sunbeams, and all round our isle
Swim thro' the lovely crescent moon,
Glimpsing, for breathless mile on mile,
The wild sea-woods that bloomed below,
The rainbow fish, the coral cave
Where vanishing swift as melting snow
A mermaid's arm would wave.

Then, dashing shoreward thro' the spray
On sun-lit sands they cast them down,
Or in the white sea-daisies lay
With sun-stained bodies rosy-brown,
Content to watch the foam-bows flee
Across the shelving reefs and bars,
With wild eyes gazing out to sea
Like happy haunted stars.

IV.

And O, the wild sea-maiden
Drifting through the starlit air,
With white arms blossom-laden
And the sea-scents in her hair:
Sometimes we heard her singing
The midnight forest through,
Or saw a soft hand flinging
Blossoms drenched with starry dew
Into the dreaming purple cave;
And, sometimes, far and far away
Beheld across the glooming wave
Beyond the dark lagoon,
Beyond the silvery foaming bar,
The black bright rock whereon she lay
Like a honey-coloured star
Singing to the breathless moon,
Singing in the silent night
Till the stars for sheer delight

Closed their eyes, and drowsy birds
On the midmost forest spray
Took their heads from out their wings,
Thinking—it is Ariel sings
And we must catch the witching words
And sing them o'er by day.

v.

And then, there came a breath, a breath
Cool and strange and dark as death,
A stealing shadow, not of the earth
But fresh and wonder-wild as birth.
I know not when the hour began
That changed the child's heart in the man,
Or when the colours began to wane,
But all our roseate island lay
Stricken, as when an angel dies
With wings of rainbow-tinctured grain
Withering, and his radiant eyes
Closing. Pitiless walls of gray
Gathered around us, a growing tomb
From which it seemed not death or doom
Could roll the stone away.

vi.

Yet—I remember—
a gleam, a gleam,
(Or ever I dreamed that youth could die!)
Of sparkling waves and warm blue sky
As out of sleep into a dream,
Wonder-wild for the old sweet pain,
We sailed into that unknown sea
Through the gates of Eternity.

Peacefully close your mortal eyes
For ye shall wake to it again
In Paradise, in Paradise.

UNITY.

I.

HEART of my heart, the world is young;
Love lies hidden in every rose!
Every song that the skylark sung
Once, we thought, must come to a close:
Now we know the spirit of song,
Song that is merged in the chant of the whole,
Hand in hand as we wander along,
What should we doubt of the years that roll?

II.

Heart of my heart, we cannot die!
Love triumphant in flower and tree,
Every life that laughs at the sky
Tells us nothing can cease to be:
One, we are one with a song to-day,
One with the clover that scents the wold,
One with the Unknown, far away,
One with the stars, when earth grows old.

III.

Heart of my heart, we are one with the wind,
One with the clouds that are whirled o'er the lea,
One in many, O broken and blind,
One as the waves are at one with the sea!
Ay! when life seems scattered apart,
Darkens, ends as a tale that is told,
One, we are one, O heart of my heart,
One, still one, while the world grows old.

THE HILL-FLOWER.

It is my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes—
So was it sung one golden hour
Among the woodbine wreaths;
And yet, though wet with living dew,
The song seemed far more sweet than true.

Blind creatures of the sun and air
I dreamed it but a dream
That, like Narcissus, would confer
With self in every stream,
And to the leaves and boughs impart
The tremors of a human heart.

To-day a golden pinion stirred
The world's Bethesda pool,
And I believed the song I heard
Nor put my heart to school;
And through the rainbows of the dream
I saw the gates of Eden gleam.

The rain had ceased. The great hills rolled
In silence to the deep:
The gorse in waves of green and gold
Perfumed their lonely sleep;
And, at my feet, one elfin flower
Drooped, blind with glories of the shower.

I stooped—a giant from the sky—
Above its piteous shield,
And, suddenly, the dream went by,
And there—was heaven revealed!
I stooped to pluck it; but my hand
Paused, mid-way, o'er its fairyland.

Not of mine own was that strange voice,
"Pluck—tear a star from heaven!"
Mine only was the awful choice
To scoff and be forgiven
Or hear the very grass I trod
Whispering the gentle thoughts of God.

I know not if the hill-flower's place
Beneath that mighty sky,
Its lonely and aspiring grace,
Its beauty born to die,
Touched me, I know it seemed to be
Cherished by all Eternity.

Man, doomed to crush at every stride
A hundred lives like this
Which by their weakness were allied,
If by naught else, to his,
Can only for a flash discern
What passion through the whole doth yearn.

Not into words can I distil
The pity or the pain
Which hallowing all that lonely hill
Cried out "Refrain, refrain,"
Then breathed from earth and sky and sea,
Herein you did it unto Me.

Somewhile that hill was heaven's own breast,
The flower its joy and grief,
Hugged close and fostered and caressed
In every brief bright leaf:
And, ere I went thro' sun and dew,
I leant and gently touched it, too.

ACTÆON.

"Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed
And bound his forehead with Proserpine's hair."
—BROWNING (*Pauline*).

I.

LIGHT of beauty, O, "perfect in whiteness,"
Softly suffused thro' the world's dark shrouds,
Kindling them all as they pass by thy brightness,—
Hills, men, cities,—a pageant of clouds,
Thou to whom Life and Time surrender
All earth's forms as to heaven's deep care,
Who shall pierce to thy naked splendour,
Bind his brows with thy hair?

II.

Swift thro' the sprays when Spring grew bolder
Young Actæon swept to the chase!
Golden the fawn-skin, back from the shoulder
Flowing, set free the limbs' lithe grace,
Muscles of satin that rippled like sunny
Streams,—a hunter, a young athlete,
Scattering dews and crushing out honey
Under his sandalled feet.

III.

Sunset softened the crags of the mountain,
Silence melted the hunter's heart,
Only the sob of a falling fountain
Pulsed in a deep ravine apart:

All the forest seemed waiting breathless,
Eager to whisper the dying day
Some rich word that should utter the deathless
Secret of youth and May.

IV.

Down, as to May thro' the flowers that attend her,
Slowly, on tip-toe, down the ravine
Fair as the sun-god, poising a slender
Spear like a moon-shaft silver and green,
Stole he! Ah, did the oak-wood ponder
Youth's glad dream in its heart of gloom?
Dryad or fawn was it started yonder?
Ah, what whisper of doom?

V.

Gold, thro' the ferns as he gazed and listened,
Shone the soul of the wood's deep dream,
One bright glade and a pool that glistened
Full in the face of the sun's last gleam,—
Gold in the heart of a violet dingle!
Young Actæon, beware! beware!
Who shall track, while the pulses tingle,
Spring to her woodland lair?

VI.

See, at his feet, what mystical quiver,
Maiden's girdle and robe of snow,
Tossed aside by the green glen-river
Ere she bathed in the pool below?
All the fragrance of April meets him
Full in the face with its young sweet breath;
Yet, as he steals to the glade, there greets him—
Hush, what whisper of death?

VII.

Lo, in the violets, lazily dreaming,
Young Diana, the huntress, lies:
One white side thro' the violets gleaming
Heaves and sinks with her golden sighs,
One white breast like a diamond crownet
Couched in a velvet casket glows,
One white arm, tho' the violets drown it,
Thrills their purple with rose.

VIII.

Buried in fragrance, the half-moon flashes,
Beautiful, clouded, from head to heel:
One white foot in the warm wave plashes,
Violets tremble and half reveal,
Half conceal, as they kiss, the slender
Slope and curve of her sleeping limbs:
Violets bury one half the splendour;
Still, as thro' heaven, she swims.

IX.

Cold as the white rose waking at daybreak
Lifts the light of her lovely face,
Poised on an arm she watches the spray break
Over the slim white ankle's grace,
Watches the wave that sleeplessly tosses
Kissing the pure foot's pink sea-shells,
Watches the long-leaved heaven-dark mosses
Drowning their star-bright bells.

X.

Swift as the Spring where the South has brightened
Earth with bloom in one passionate night,
Swift as the violet heavens had lightened
Swift to perfection, blinding, white,

Dian arose: and Actæon saw her,
Only he since the world began!
Only in dreams could Endymion draw her
Down to the heart of man.

XI.

Fair as the dawn upon Himalaya
Anger flashed from her cheek's pure rose,
Alpine peaks at the passage of Maia
Flushed not fair as her breasts' white snows.
Ah, fair form of the heaven's completeness,
Who shall sing thee or who shall say
Whence that "high perfection of sweetness,"
Perfect to save or slay?

XII.

Perfect in beauty, beauty the portal
Here on earth to the world's deep shrine,
Beauty hidden in all things mortal,
Who shall mingle his eyes with thine?
Thou, to whom Life and Death surrender
All earth's forms as to heaven's deep care,
Who shall pierce to thy naked splendour,
Bind his brows with thy hair?

XIII.

Beauty, perfect in blinding whiteness,
Softly suffused thro' the world's dark shrouds,
Kindling them all as they pass by her brightness,—
Hills, men, cities,—a pageant of clouds,
She, the unchanging, shepherds their changes,
Bids them mingle and form and flow,
Flowers and flocks and the great hill-ranges
Follow her cry and go.

XIV.

Swift as the sweet June lightning flashes,
Down she stoops to the purpling pool,
Sudden and swift her white hand dashes
Rainbow mists in his eyes! "Ah, fool!
Hunter," she cries to the young Actæon,
"Change to the hunted, rise and fly,
Swift ere the wild pack utter its pæan,
Swift for thy hounds draw nigh!"

XV.

Lo, as he trembles, the greenwood branches
Dusk his brows with their antlered pride!
Lo, as a stag thrown back on its haunches
Quivers, with velvet nostrils wide,
Lo, he changes! The soft fur darkens
Down to the fetlock's lifted fear!—
Hounds are baying!—he snuffs and hearkens,
"Fly, for the stag is here!"

XVI.

Swift he leapt thro' the ferns, Actæon,
Young Actæon, the lordly stag:
Full and mellow the deep-mouthed pæan
Swelled behind him from crag to crag:
Well he remembered that sweet throat leading,
Wild with terror he raced and strained,
On thro' the darkness, thorn-swept, bleeding:
Ever they gained and gained!

XVII.

Death, like a darkling huntsman holloed—
Swift, Actæon!—desire and shame
Leading the pack of the passions followed,
Red jaws frothing with white-hot flame,

Volleying out of the glen, they leapt up,
Snapped and fell short of the foam-flecked thighs. . . .
Inch by terrible inch they crept up,
Shadows with blood-shot eyes.

XVIII.

Still with his great heart bursting asunder
Still thro' the night he struggled and bled;
Suddenly round him the pack's low thunder
Surged, the hounds that his own hand fed
Fastened in his throat, with red jaws drinking
Deep!—for a moment his antlered pride
Soared o'er their passionate seas, then, sinking,
Fell for the fangs to divide.

XIX.

Light of beauty, O, perfect in whiteness,
Softly suffused thro' the years' dark veils,
Kindling them all as they pass by her brightness,
Filling our hearts with her old-world tales,
She, the unchanging, shepherds their changes,
Bids them mingle and form and flow,
Flowers and flocks and the great hill-ranges
Follow her cry and go.

XX.

Still, in the violets, lazily dreaming
Young Diana, the huntress, lies:
One white side thro' the violets gleaming
Heaves and sinks with her golden sighs;
One white breast like a diamond crownet
Couched in a velvet casket glows,
One white arm, tho' the violets drown it,
Thrills their purple with rose.

LUCIFER'S FEAST.

(A EUROPEAN NIGHTMARE.)

To celebrate the ascent of man, one gorgeous night
Lucifer gave a feast.
Its world-bewildering light
Danced in Belshazzar's tomb, and the old kings dead and gone
Felt their dust creep to jewels in crumbling Babylon.

Two nations were His guests—the top and flower of Time,
The fore-front of an age which now had learned to climb
The slopes where Newton knelt, the heights that Shakespeare trod,
The mountains whence Beethoven rolled the voice of God.
Lucifer's feasting-lamps were like the morning stars,
But at the board-head shone the blood-red lamp of Mars.

League upon glittering league, white front and flabby face
Bent o'er the groaning board. Twelve brave men droned the grace;
But with instinctive tact, in courtesy to their Host,
Omitted God the Son and God the Holy Ghost,
And to the God of Battles raised their humble prayers.

Then, then, like thunder, all the guests drew up their chairs.

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HAWARDEN

By each a drinking-cup, yellow, almost, as gold,
(*The blue eye-sockets gave the thumbs a good firm hold*)
Adorned the flowery board. Could even brave men shrink?

Why if the cups *were* skulls, they had red wine to drink?
And had not each a napkin, white and peaked and proud,
Waiting to wipe his mouth? A napkin? Nay, a shroud!
This was a giants' feast, on hell's imperial scale.
The blades glistened.
The shrouds—O, in one snowy gale,
The pink hands fluttered them out, and spread them on their knees.
Who knew what gouts might drop, what filthy flakes of grease,
Now that o'er every shoulder, through the coiling steam,
Inhuman faces peered, with wolfish eyes a-gleam,
And grey-faced vampire Lusts that whinneyed in each ear
Hints of the hideous courses?
None may name them here?
None? And we may not see! The distant cauldrons cloak
The lava-coloured plains with clouds of umber smoke.
Nay, by that shrapnel-light, by those wild shooting stars
That rip the clouds away with fiercer fire than Mars,
They are painted sharp as death. If these can eat and drink
Chatter and laugh and rattle their knives, why should we shrink
From empty names? We know those ghastly gleams are true:
Why should Christ cry again—*They know not what they do?*
They, heirs of all the ages, sons of Shakespeare's land,
They, brothers of Beethoven, smiling, cultured, bland,
Whisper with sidling heads to ghouls with bloody lips.

Each takes upon his plate a small round thing that drips
And quivers, a child's heart.

Miles on miles
The glittering table bends o'er that first course, and smiles;

For, through the wreaths of smoke, the grey Lusts bear aloft
The second course, on leaden chargers, large and soft,
Bodies of women, steaming in an opal mist,
Red-branded here and there where vampire-teeth have kissed,
But white as pig's flesh, newly killed, and cleanly dressed,
A lemon in each mouth and roses round each breast,
Emblems to show how deeply, sweetly satisfied,
The breasts, the lips, can sleep, whose children fought and died
For — what? For country? God, once more Thy shrapnel-light!

Let those dark slaughter-houses burst upon our sight,
These kitchens are too clean, too near the tiring room!
Let Thy white shrapnel rend those filthier veils of gloom,
Rip the last fogs away and strip the foul thing bare!
One lightning-picture—see—yon bayonet-bristling square
Mown down, mown down, mown down, wild swathes of crimson wheat,
The white-eyed charge, the blast, the terrible retreat,
The blood-greased wheels of cannon thundering into line
O'er that red writhe of pain, rent groin and shattered spine,
The moaning faceless face that kissed its child last night,
The raw pulp of the heart that beat for love's delight,
The heap of twisting bodies, clotted and congealed
In one red huddle of anguish on the loathsome field,
The seas of obscene slaughter spewing their blood-red yeast,
Multitudes pouring out their entrails for the feast,
Knowing not why, but dying, they think, for some high cause,
Dying for "hearth and home," their flags, their creeds, their laws.
Ask of the Bulls and Bears, ask if they understand
How both great grappling armies bleed for their own land;
For in that faith they die! These hoodwinked thousands die
Simply as heroes, gulled by hell's profoundest lie.

Who keeps the slaughter-house? Not these, not these who gain
Nought but the sergeant's shilling and the homeless pain!
Who pulls the ropes? Not these, who buy their crust of bread
With the salt sweat of labour! These but bury their dead
Then sweat again for food!
Christ, is the hour not come,
To send forth one great voice and strike this dark hell dumb,
A voice to out-crash the cannon, one united cry
To sweep these wild-beast standards down that stain the sky,
To hurl these Lions and Bears and Eagles to their doom,
One voice, one heart, one soul, one fire that shall consume
The last red reeking shreds that flicker against the blast
And purge the Augean stalls we call "our glorious past"!
One voice from dawn and sunset, one almighty voice,
Full-throated as the sea—ye sons o' the earth, rejoice!
Beneath the all-loving sky, confederate kings ye stand,
Fling open wide the gates o' the world-wide Fatherland.
. . . . . .
Poor fools, we dare not dream it! We that pule and whine
Of art and science, we, whose great souls leave no shrine
Unshattered, we that climb the Sinai Shakespeare trod,
The Olivets where Beethoven walked and talked with God,
We that have weighed the stars and reined the lightning, we
That stare thro' heaven and plant our footsteps in the sea,
We whose great souls have risen so far above the creeds
That we can jest at Christ and leave Him where He bleeds,
A legend of the dark, a tale so false or true
That howsoe'er we jest at Him, the jest sounds new.
(Our weariest dinner-tables never tire of that!
Let the clown sport with Christ, never the jest falls flat!)
Poor fools, we dare not dream a dream so strange, so great,
As on this ball of dust to found one "world-wide state,"
To float one common flag above our little lands,

And ere our little sun grows cold to clasp our hands
In friendship for a moment!
. . . . . .
Hark, the violins
Are swooning through the mist. The great blue band begins,
Playing, in dainty scorn, a hymn we used to know,
How long was it, ten thousand thousand years ago?

There is a green hill far away
Beside a City wall!—
And O, the music swung a-stray
With a solemn dying fall;
For it was a pleasant jest to play
Hymns in the Devil's Hall.

And yet, and yet, if aught be true,
This dream we left behind,
This childish Christ, be-mocked anew
To please the men of mind,
Yet hung so far beyond the flight
Of our most lofty thought
That—Lucifer laughed *at* us that night,
Not *with* us, as he ought.

Beneath the blood-red lamp of Mars,
Cloaked with a scarlet cloud
He gazed along the line of stars
Above the guzzling crowd:
Sinister, thunder-scarred, he raised
His great world-wandering eyes,
And on some distant vision gazed
Beyond our cloudy skies.

"*Poor bats*," he sneered, "*their jungle-dark*
Civilisation's noon!
Poor wolves, that hunt in packs and bark
Beneath the grinning moon;

Poor fools, that cast the cross away,
Before they break the sword;
Poor sots, who take the night for day;
Have mercy on me, Lord.

Beyond their wisdom's deepest skies
I see Thee hanging yet,
The love still hungering in Thine eyes,
Thy plaited crown still wet!
Thine arms outstretched to fold them all
Beneath Thy sheltering breast;
But—since they will not hear Thy call,
Lord, I forbear to jest.

Lord, I forbear! The day I fell
I fell at least thro' pride!
Rather than these should share my hell
Take me, thou Crucified!
O, let me share Thy cross of grief,
And let me work Thy will,
As morning star, or dying thief,
Thy fallen angel still.

Lord, I forbear! For Thee, at least,
In pain so like to mine,
The mighty meaning of their feast
Is plain as bread and wine:
O, smile once more, far off, alone!
Since these nor hear nor see,
From my deep hell, so like Thine own,
Lord Christ, I pity Thee.

Yet once again, he thought, they shall be fully tried,
If they be devils or fools too light for hell's deep pride.

The champ of teeth was over, and the reeking room
Gaped for the speeches now. Across the sulphurous fume

Lucifer gave a sign. The guests stood thundering up!
"Gentlemen, charge your glasses!"
Every yellow cup
Frothed with the crimson blood. They brandished them on high!
"Gentlemen, drink to those who fight and know not why!"

And in the bubbling blood each nose was buried deep.
"Gentlemen, drink to those who sowed that we might reap!
Drink to the pomp, pride, circumstance, of glorious war,
The grand self-sacrifice that made us what we are!
And drink to the peace-lovers who believe that peace
Is War, red, bloody War; for War can never cease
Unless we drain the veins of peace to fatten WAR!
Gentlemen, drink to the brains that made us what we are!
Drink to self-sacrifice that helps us all to shake
The world with tramp of armies. Germany, awake!
England, awake! Shakespeare's, Beethoven's Fatherland,
Are you not both aware, do you not understand,
Self-sacrifice is competition? It is the law
Of Life, and so, though both of you are wholly right,
Self-sacrifice requires that both of you should fight."
And "Hoch! hoch! hoch!" they cried; and "Hip, hip, hip, Hurrah!"

This raised the gorge of Lucifer. With one deep "Bah,"
Above those croaking toads he towered like Gabriel;

Then straightway left the table and went home to hell.

VETERANS.

(WRITTEN FOR THE RELIEF FUND OF THE CRIMEAN VETERANS.)

I.

When the last charge sounds
And the battle thunders o'er the plain,
Thunders o'er the trenches where the red streams flow,
Will it not be well with us,
Veterans, veterans,
If, beneath your torn old flag, we burst upon the foe?

II.

When the last post sounds
And the night is on the battle-field,
Night and rest at last from all the tumult of our wars,
Will it not be well with us,
Veterans, veterans,
If, with duty done like yours, we lie beneath the stars?

III.

When the great reveille sounds
For the terrible last Sabaoth,
All the legions of the dead shall hear the trumpet ring!
Will it not be well with us,
Veterans, veterans,
If, beneath your torn old flag, we rise to meet our king?

THE QUEST RENEWED.

It is too soon, too soon, though time be brief,
Quite to forswear thy quest,
O Light, whose farewell dyes the falling leaf,
Fades thro' the fading West.

Thou'rt flown too soon! I stretch my hands out still,
O, Light of Life, to Thee,
Who leav'st an Olivet in each far blue hill,
A sorrow on every sea.

It is too soon, here while the loud world roars
For wealth and power and fame,
Too soon quite to forget those other shores
Afar, from whence I came;

Too soon even to forget the first dear dream
Dreamed far away, when tears could freely flow;
And life seemed infinite, as that sky's great gleam
Deepened, to which I go,

Too soon even to forget the fluttering fire
And those old books beside the friendly hearth,
When time seemed endless as my own desire,
And angels walked our earth;

Too soon quite to forget amid the throng
What once the silent hills, the sounding beach
Taught me—where singing was the prize of song,
And heaven within my reach.

It is too soon amid the cynic sneers,
The sophist smiles, the greedy mouths and hands,
Quite to forget the light of those dead years
And my lost mountain-lands;

Too soon to lose that everlasting hope
(For so it seemed) of youth in love's pure reign,
Though while I linger on this darkening slope
Nought seems quite worth the pain.

It is too soon for me to break that trust,
O, Light of Light, flown far past sun and moon,
Burn back thro' this dark panoply of dust;
Or let me follow—soon.

THE LIGHTS OF HOME.

Pilot, how far from home?—
Not far, not far to-night,
A flight of spray, a sea-bird's flight,
A flight of tossing foam,
And then the lights of home!—

And, yet again, how far?
Seems you the way so brief?
Those lights beyond the roaring reef
Were lights of moon and star,
Far, far, none knows how far!

Pilot, how far from home?—
The great stars pass away
Before Him as a flight of spray,
Moons as a flight of foam!
I see the lights of home.

NEW POEMS

'TWEEN THE LIGHTS.

"The Nine men's morrice is filled up with mud . . .
From our debate, from our dissension."
—SHAKESPEARE.

I.

FAIRIES, come back! We have not seen
Your dusky foot-prints on the green
This many a year. No frolic now
Shakes the dew from the hawthorn-bough.
Never a man and never a maid
Spies you in the blue-bell shade;
Yet, where the nine men's morrice stood,
Our spades are clearing out the mud.

Chorus.—Come, little irised heralds, fling
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing
The bright eyes and the cordial hand
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.

II.

Fairies, come back! Our pomp of gold,
Our blazing noon, grows gray and old;
The scornful glittering ages wane:
Forgive, forget, come back again.

This is our England's Hallowe'en!
Come, trip it, trip it o'er the green,
Trip it, amidst the roaring mart,
In the still meadows of the heart.

Come, little irised heralds, fling
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing
The bright eyes and the cordial hand
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.

III.

Fairies, come back! Once more the gleams
Of your lost Eden haunt our dreams,
Where Evil, at the touch of Good,
Withers in the Enchanted Wood:
Fairies, come back! Drive gaunt Despair
And Famine to their ghoulish lair!
Tap at each heart's bright window-pane
Thro' merry England once again.

Come, little irised heralds, fling
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing
The bright eyes and the cordial hand
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.

IV.

Fairies, come back! And, if you bring
That long-expected song to sing,
Ciss needs not, ere she welcomes you,
To find a sixpence in her shoe!
If, of the mud he clears away,
Tom bears the ignoble stain to-day,
Come back, and he will not forget
The heavens that yearn beyond us yet.

Come, little irised heralds, fling
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing
The bright eyes and the cordial hand
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.

V.

Yet, if for this you will not come,
Your friends, the children, call you home
Fairies, they wear no May-day crowns,
Your playmates in those grim black towns
Look, fairies, how they peak and pine,
How hungrily their great eyes shine!
From fevered alley and fœtid lane
Plead the thin arms—*Come back again!*

Come, little irisèd heralds, fling
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing
The bright eyes and the cordial hand
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.

VI.

We have named the stars and weighed the moon,
Counted our gains and . . . lost the boon,
If *this* be the end of all our lore—
To draw the blind and close the door!
O, lift the latch, slip in between
The things which we have heard and seen,
Slip thro' the fringes of the blind
Into the souls of all mankind.

Come, little irised heralds, fling
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing
The bright eyes and the cordial hand
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.

VII.

Fairies, come back! Our wisdom dies
Beneath your deeper, starrier skies!
We have reined the lightning, probed the flower:
Bless, as of old, our twilight hour!

Bring dreams, and let the dreams be true,
Bring hope that makes each heart anew,
Bring love that knits all hearts in one;
Then—sing of heaven and bring the sun!

Come, little irised heralds, fling
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing
The bright eyes and the cordial hand
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.

CREATION.

In the beginning, there was nought
But heaven, one Majesty of Light,
Beyond all speech, beyond all thought,
Beyond all depth, beyond all height,
Consummate heaven, the first and last,
Enfolding in its perfect prime
No future rushing to the past,
But one rapt Now, that knew not Space or Time.

Formless it was, being gold on gold,
And void—but with that complete Life
Where music could no wings unfold
Till lo, God smote the strings of strife!
"Myself unto Myself am Throne,
Myself unto Myself am Thrall
I that am All am all alone,"
He said, "Yea, I have nothing, having all."

And, gathering round His mount of bliss
The angel-squadrons of His will,
He said, "One battle yet there is
To win, one vision to fulfil!
Since heaven where'er I gaze expands,
And power that knows no strife or cry,
Weakness shall bind and pierce My hands
And make a world for Me wherein to die.

All might, all vastness and all glory
Being Mine, I must descend and make
Out of My heart a song, a story
Of little hearts that burn and break;
Out of My passion without end
I will make little azure seas,
And into small sad fields descend
And make green grass, white daisies, rustling trees."

Then shrank His angels, knowing He thrust
His arms out East and West and gave
For every little dream of dust
Part of His Life as to a grave!
'*Enough, O Father, for Thy words*
Have pierced Thy hands!' But, low and sweet,
He said 'Sunsets and streams and birds,
And drifting clouds!'—The purple stained His feet.—

'Enough!' His angels moaned in fear,
'*Father, Thy words have pierced Thy side!*'
He whispered 'Roses shall grow there,
And there must be a hawthorn-tide,
And ferns, dewy at dawn,' and still
They moaned—*Enough, the red drops bleed!*
'And,' sweet and low, 'on every hill,'
He said, 'I will have flocks and lambs to lead.'

His angels bowed their heads beneath
Their wings till that great pang was gone:
Pour not Thy soul out unto Death!
They moaned, and still His Love flowed on,
"There shall be small white wings to stray
From bliss to bliss, from bloom to bloom,
And blue flowers in the wheat; and—" '*Stay!*
Speak not,' they cried, '*the word that seals Thy tomb!*'

He spake—"I have thought of a little child
That I will have there to embark
On small adventures in the wild,
And front slight perils in the dark;
And I will hide from him and lure
His laughing eyes with suns and moons,
And rainbows that shall not endure;
And—when he is weary sing him drowsy tunes."

His angels fell before Him weeping
'*Enough! Tempt not the Gates of Hell!*'
He said 'His soul is in his keeping
That we may love each other well,
And lest the dark too much affright him,
I will strow countless little stars
Across his childish skies to light him
That he may wage in peace his mimic wars;

And oft forget Me as he plays
With swords and childish merchandize,
Or with his elfin balance weighs,
Or with his foot-rule metes, the skies;
Or builds his castles by the deep,
Or tunnels through the rocks, and then—
Turn to Me as he falls asleep,
And, in his dreams, feel for My hand again.

And when he is older he shall be
My friend and walk here at My side;
Or—when he wills—grow young with Me,
And, to that happy world where once we died
Descending through the calm blue weather,
Buy life once more with our immortal breath,
And wander through the little fields together,
And taste of Love and Death.'

THE PASSING OF THE KING.

Silently over his vast imperial seas,
Over his sentinel fleets the Shadow swept
And all his armies slept.
There was but one quick challenge at the gate,
Then—the cold menace of that out-stretched hand,
Waving aside the panoplies of State,
Brought the last faithful watchers to their knees,
And lightning flashed the grief from land to land.

Mourn, Britain, mourn, not for a king alone!
This was the people's king! His purple throne
Was in their hearts. They shared it. Millions of swords
Could not have shaken it! Sharers of this doom,
This democratic doom which all men know,
His Common-weal, in this great common woe,
Veiling its head in the universal gloom,
With that majestic grief which knows not words,
Bows o'er a world-wide tomb.

Mourn, Europe, for our England set this Crown
In splendour past the reach of temporal power,
Secure above the thunders of the hour,
A sun in the great skies of her renown,
A sun to hold her wheeling worlds in one
By its own course of duty pre-ordained,
Where'er the meteors flash and fall, a sun
With its great course of duty!

So he reigned,
And died in its observance. Mightier he
Than any despot, in his people's love,
He served that law which rules the Thrones above,
That world-wide law which by the raging sea
Abased the flatterers of Canúte and makes
The King that abnegates all lesser power
A rock in time of trouble and a tower
Of strength where'er the tidal tempest breaks;
That world-wide law whose name is harmony,
Whose service perfect freedom!

And *his* name
The Peace-maker, through all the future years
Shall burn, a glorious and prophetic flame,
A beaconing sun that never shall go down,
A sun to speed the world's diviner morrow,
A sun that shines the brighter for our sorrow;
For, O, what splendour in a monarch's crown
Vies with the splendour of his people's tears?

And now, O now, while the sorrowful trumpet is blown,
From island to continent, zone to imperial zone,
And the flags of the nations are lowered in grief with our own;
Now, while the roll of the drums that for battle were dumb
When he reigned, salute his passing; and low on the breeze
From the snow-bound North to the Australasian seas
Surges the solemn lament—O, shall it not come,
A glimpse of that mightier union of all mankind?
Now, though our eyes, as they gaze on the vision, grow blind,
Now, while the world is all one funeral knell,
And the mournful cannon thunder his great farewell,
Now, while the bells of a thousand cities toll,
Remember, O England, remember the ageless goal,
Rally the slumbering faith in the depths of thy soul,

Lift up thine eyes to the Kingdom for which he fought,
That Empire of Peace and Good-will, for which to his
death-hour he wrought.
Then, then while the pomp of the world seems a little thing,
Ay, though by the world it be said,
The King is dead!
We shall lift up our hearts and answer—*Long live the
King!*

THE SAILOR-KING.

THE fleet, the fleet puts out to sea
In a thunder of blinding foam to-night,
With a bursting wreck-strewn reef to lee,
But—a seaman fired yon beacon-light!
Seamen hailing a seaman, know—
Free-men crowning a free-man, sing—
The worth of that light where the great ships go,
The signal-fire of the king.

Cloud and wind may shift and veer:
This is steady and this is sure,
A signal over our hope and fear,
A pledge of the strength that shall endure—
Having no part in our storm-tossed strife—
A sign of union, which shall bring
Knowledge to men of their close-knit life,
The signal-fire of the king.

His friends are the old grey glorious waves
The wide world round, the wide world round,
That have roared with our guns and covered our graves
From Nombre Dios to Plymouth Sound;
And his crown shall shine, a central sun
Round which the planet-nations sing,
Going their ways, but linked in one,
As the ships of our sailor-king.

Many the ships, but a single fleet;
  Many the roads, but a single goal;
And a light, a light where all roads meet,
  The beacon-fire of an Empire's soul;
The worth of that light his seamen know,
  Through all the deaths that the storm can bring,
The crown of their comrade-ship a-glow,
  The signal-fire of the king.

THE FIDDLER'S FAREWELL.

With my fiddle to my shoulder,
And my hair turning gray,
And my heart growing older
I must shuffle on my way!
Tho' there's not a hearth to greet me
I must reap as I sowed,
And—the sunset shall meet me
At the turn of the road.

O, the whin's a dusky yellow
And the road a rosy white,
And the blackbird's call is mellow
At the falling of night;
And there's honey in the heather
Where we'll make our last abode,
My tunes and me together
At the turn of the road.

I have fiddled for your city
Thro' market-place and inn!
I have poured forth my pity
On your sorrow and your sin!
But your riches are your burden,
And your pleasure is your goad!
I've the whin-gold for guerdon
At the turn of the road.

Your village-lights 'll call me
As the lights of home the dead;
But a black night befall me
Ere your pillows rest my head!
God be praised, tho' like a jewel
Every cottage casement showed,
There's a star that's not so cruel
At the turn of the road.

Nay, beautiful and kindly
Are the faces drawing nigh,
But I gaze on them blindly
And hasten, hasten by;
For O, no face of wonder
On earth has ever glowed
Like the One that waits me yonder
At the turn of the road.

Her face is lit with splendour,
She dwells beyond the skies;
But deep, deep and tender
Are the tears in her eyes:
The angels see them glistening
In pity for my load,
And—she's waiting there, she's listening,
At the turn of the road.

TO A PESSIMIST.

Life like a cruel mistress woos
  The passionate heart of man, you say,
Only in mockery to refuse
  His love, at last, and turn away.

To me she seems a queen that knows
  How great is love—but ah, how rare!—
And, pointing heavenward ere she goes,
  Gives him the rose from out her hair.

MOUNT IDA.

[This poem commemorates an event of some years ago, when a young Englishman—still remembered by many of his contemporaries at Oxford—went up into Mount Ida and was never seen again.]

I.

Not cypress, but this warm pine-plumage now
Fragrant with sap, I pluck; nor bid you weep,
Ye Muses that still haunt the heavenly brow
Of Ida, though the ascent is hard and steep:
Weep not for him who left us wrapped in sleep
At dawn beneath the holy mountain's breast
And all alone from Ilion's gleaming shore
Clomb the high sea-ward glens, fain to drink deep
Of earth's old glory from your silent crest,
Take the cloud-conquering throne
Of gods, and gaze alone
Thro' heaven. Darkling we slept who saw his face no more.

II.

Ah yet, in him hath Lycidas a brother,
And Adonaïs will not say him nay,
And Thyrsis to the breast of one sweet Mother
Welcomes him, climbing by the self-same way:

Quietly as a cloud at break of day
Up the long glens of golden dew he stole
(And surely Bion called to him afar!)
The tearful hyacinths, and the greenwood spray
Clinging to keep him from the sapphire goal,
Kept of his path no trace!
Upward the yearning face
Clomb the ethereal height, calm as the morning star.

III.

Ah yet, incline, dear Sisters, or my song
That with the light wings of the skimming swallow
Must range the reedy slopes, will work him wrong!
And with some golden shaft do thou, Apollo,
Show the pine-shadowed path that none may follow;
For, as the blue air shuts behind a bird,
Round him closed Ida's cloudy woods and rills!
Day-long, night-long, by echoing height and hollow,
We called him, but our tumult died unheard:
Down from the scornful sky
Our faint wing-broken cry
Fluttered and perished among the many-folded hills.

IV.

Ay, though we clomb each faint-flushed peak of vision,
Nought but our own sad faces we divined:
Thy radiant way still laughed us to derision,
And still revengeful Echo proved unkind;
And oft our faithless hearts half feared to find
Thy cold corse in some dark mist-drenched ravine
Where the white foam flashed headlong to the sea:
How should we find thee, spirits deaf and blind
Even to the things which we had heard and seen?
Eyes that could see no more
The old light on sea and shore,
What should they hope or fear to find? They found not thee;

V.

For thou wast ever alien to our skies,
A wistful stray of radiance on this earth,
A changeling with deep memories in thine eyes
Mistily gazing thro' our loud-voiced mirth
To some fair land beyond the gates of birth;
Yet, as a star thro' clouds, thou still didst shed
Through our dark world thy lovelier, rarer glow;
Time, like a picture of but little worth,
Before thy young hand lifelessly outspread,
At one light stroke from thee
Gleamed with Eternity;
Thou gav'st the master's touch, and we—we did not know

VI.

Not though we gazed from heaven o'er Ilion
Dreaming on earth below, mistily crowned
With towering memories, and beyond her shone
The wine-dark seas Achilles heard resound!
Only, and after many days, we found
Dabbled with dew, at border of a wood
Bedded in hyacinths, open and a-glow
Thy Homer's Iliad. . . . Dryad tears had drowned
The rough Greek type and, as with honey or blood,
One crocus with crushed gold
Stained the great page that told
Of gods that sighed their loves on Ida, long ago.

VII.

See—*for a couch to their ambrosial limbs*
Even as their golden load of splendour presses
The fragrant thyme, a billowing cloud up-swims
Of springing flowers beneath their deep caresses,

Hyacinth, lotus, crocus, wildernesses
Of bloom . . . but clouds of sunlight and of dew
Dropping rich balm, round the dark pine-woods curled
That the warm wonder of their in-woven tresses,
And all the secret blisses that they knew,
Where beauty kisses truth
In heaven's deep heart of youth,
Might still be hidden, as thou art, from the heartless world.

VIII.

Even as we found thy book, below these rocks
Perchance that strange great eagle's feather lay,
When Ganymede, from feeding of his flocks
On Ida, vanished thro' the morning gray:
Stranger it seemed, if thou couldst cast away
Those golden musics as a thing of nought,
A dream for which no longer thou hadst need!
Ah, was it here then that the break of day
Brought thee the substance for the shadow, taught
Thy soul a swifter road
To ease it of its load
And watch this world of shadows as a dream recede?

IX.

We slept! Darkling we slept! Our busy schemes,
Our cold mechanic world awhile was still;
But O, their eyes are blinded even in dreams
Who from the heavenlier Powers withdraw their will:
Here did the dawn with purer light fulfil
Thy happier eyes than ours, here didst thou see
The quivering wonder-light in flower and dew,
The quickening glory of the haunted hill,
The Hamadryad beckoning from the tree.
The Naiad from the stream;
While from her long dark dream
Earth woke, trembling with life, light, beauty, through and through.

X.

And the everlasting miracle of things
Flowed round thee, and this dark earth opposed no bar,
And radiant faces from the flowers and springs
Dawned on thee, whispering, *Knowest thou whence we are?*
Faintly thou heardst us calling thee afar
As Hylas heard, swooning beneath the wave,
Girdled with glowing arms, while wood and glen
Echoed his name beneath that rosy star;
And thy farewell came faint as from the grave
For very bliss; but we
Could neither hear nor see;
And all the hill with *Hylas! Hylas!* rang again.

XI.

But there were deeper love-tales for thine ears
Than mellow-tongued Theocritus could tell:
Over him like a sea two thousand years
Had swept. They solemnized his music well!
Farewell! What word could answer but farewell,
From thee, O happy spirit, that couldst steal
So quietly from this world at break of day?
What voice of ours could break the silent spell
Beauty had cast upon thee, or reveal
The gates of sun and dew
Which oped and let thee through
And led thee heavenward by that deep enchanted way?

XII.

Yet here thou mad'st thy choice: Love, Wisdom, Power,
As once before young Paris, they stood here!
Beneath them Ida, like one full-blown flower,
Shed her bloom earthward thro' the radiant air

Leaving her rounded fruit, their beauty, bare
To the everlasting dawn; and, in thy palm
The golden apple of the Hesperian isle
Which thou must only yield to the Most Fair;
But not to Juno's great luxurious calm,
Nor Dian's curved white moon,
Gav'st thou the sunset's boon,
Nor to foam-bosomed Aphrodite's rose-lipped smile.

XIII.

Here didst thou make the eternal choice aright,
Here, in this hallowed haunt of nymph and faun,
They stood before thee in that great new light,
The three great splendours of the immortal dawn,
With all the cloudy veils of Time withdrawn
Or only glistening round the firm white snows
Of their pure beauty like the golden dew
Brushed from the feathery ferns below the lawn;
But not to cold Diana's morning rose,
Nor to great Juno's frown
Cast thou the apple down,
And, when the Paphian raised her lustrous eyes anew,

XIV.

Thou from thy soul didst whisper—*in that heaven*
Which yearns beyond us! Lead me up the height!
How should the golden fruit to one be given
Till your three splendours in that Sun unite
Where each in each ye move like light in light?
How should I judge the rapture till I know
The pain? And like three waves of music there
They closed thee round, blinding thy blissful sight
With beauty and, like one roseate orb a-glow,
They bore thee on their breasts
Up the sun-smitten crests
And melted with thee smiling into the Most Fair.

XV.

Upward and onward, ever as ye went
The cities of the world nestled beneath
Closer, as if in love, round Ida, blent
With alien hills in one great bridal-wreath
Of dawn-flushed clouds; while, breathing with your breath
New heavens mixed with your mounting bliss. Deep eyes,
Beautiful eyes, imbrued with the world's tears
Dawned on you, beautiful gleams of Love and Death
Flowed thro' your questioning with divine replies
From that ineffable height
Dark with excess of light
Where the Ever-living dies and the All-loving hears.

XVI.

For thou hadst seen what tears upon man's face
Bled from the heart or burned from out the brain,
And not denied or cursed, but couldst embrace
Infinite sweetness in the heart of pain,
And heardst those universal choirs again
Wherein like waves of one harmonious sea
All our slight dreams of heaven are singing still,
And still the throned Olympians swell the strain,
And, hark, the burden of all—*Come unto Me!*
Sky into deepening sky
Melts with that one great cry;
And the lost doves of Ida moan on Siloa's hill.

XVII.

I gather all the ages in my song
And send them singing up the heights to thee!
Chord by æonian chord the stars prolong
Their passionate echoes to Eternity:

Earth wakes, and one orchestral symphony
Sweeps o'er the quivering harp-strings of mankind;
Grief modulates into heaven, hate drowns in love,
No strife now but of love in that great sea
Of song! I dream! I dream! Mine eyes grow blind:
Chords that I not command
Escape the fainting hand;
Tears fall. Thou canst not hear. Thou'rt still too far above.

XVIII.

Farewell! What word should answer but farewell
From thee, O happy spirit, whose clear gaze
Discerned the path—clear, but unsearchable—
Where Olivet sweetens, deepens, Ida's praise,
The path that strikes as thro' a sunlit haze
Through Time to that clear reconciling height
Where our commingling gleams of godhead dwell;
Strikes thro' the turmoil of our darkling days
To that great harmony where, like light in light,
Wisdom and Beauty still
Haunt the thrice-holy hill,
And Love, immortal Love . . . what answer but farewell?

THE END.

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